

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
FANNY MEADOWS.

In a SERIES of LETTERS.

By the AUTHOR of
The EXEMPLARY MOTHER.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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T O

EDWARD JERNINGHAM, Esq;

S I R,

YOUR elegant and pathetic Poems not only entitle You to the Applause of the Public in general, but likewise to the more peculiar Approbation of the Female Sex in particular. In the Name, then, of that Sex, permit me thus publickly to thank you; and as the best Proof I can give you of my Esteem, let me request you to accept the
Guardian-

Guardianship of my *Fanny Meadows*. The Approbation which you have given of her Sentiments and Conduct in private, induces me to hope, that her public Reception will neither contradict the Judgment of her Guardian, nor the Wishes of her Parent.

I am, Sir,

with real Esteem,

Your obliged humble Servant,

MARIA SUSANNA COOPER.

THE



[1]



THE
HISTORY
OF
FANNY MEADOWS.

LETTER I.

GEORGE WALLACE, *Esq;* to Lord
RUTLAND.

WELL, my Friend, may I yet congratulate you on being enlisted under *Cupid's* Banner, or do you still defy him, and all his Artillery? You remember your Promise; I am to be your Confidant. I am

VOL. I.

B

very

very impatient for the important Trust. Let me tell you, the Character of a rational Lover is a very difficult one to sustain. For my own part, I am often in Love, but seldom rational. The Women, in general, endeavour to please so much by Externals, that they neglect the Interior. You despise mere Regularity of Feature, you have often said; now, tho' I don't think it at all contemptible, yet I do not deem it quite so all-sufficient as some pretty Ladies imagine. I have been in Company with reigning Beauties, and tho' I have gazed with Delight till my Eyes have mislaid my Heart, I have wished for a little Regale of my mental Taste. Thank Heaven, your Fortune enables you to pay the Debt to Merit, whenever your Heart becomes sensible of it, tho' its Possessor may have no other Recommendation. I expect from you

to



to support the Character of *Husband* and *Father*, as you have hitherto discharged the earlier Duties of Life. No Batchelorian Schemes, I intreat. You owe to your Family the Addition of a Consort, who would perpetuate your Name and your Virtues. Lady *Sarah M*—— wishes, I believe, to inspire you with Sensibility. She betrays her Inclination, by attempting to disguise it. She praises, despises, and ridicules your Sentiments in the same moment. She is a fine Woman, and universally called an accomplished one ; but with all her Attractions, Lady *Sarah* is not the Woman I wish should ever become the Wife of Lord *Rutland*. Her Qualifications are more shewy than intrinsic. She has not the Mind I wish your Wife to possess. No more, therefore, of Lady *Sarah*. I have looked round amongst the Nobility. Many of them are

4 *The HISTORY of*

esteemed amiable, and really there are good Qualities diffused through a Number, which must all center in one, to form the Lady of your Choice. Look about you, chuse for yourself, and resign your Liberty for a more pleasing Bondage. If I had the Requisites for Matrimony which distinguish you, I would chuse my Mate, and I think be as constant as a Turtle. But knowing my own natural Inconstancy, and having been unfortunate in my Likings, I most probably shall continue to be

Your solitary,

but truly friendly,

G. WALLACE.

LET-

LETTER II.

Lord RUTLAND to GEO. WALLACE, *Esq*;

YOU are the strongest Advocate for Matrimony, of any Person I ever knew, whose Practice so evidently contradicts his Principles. Pr'ythee, dear *George*, be not so very anxious to precipitate thy Friend into a State, the Happiness of which depends on "Mutuality of Soul." I own to you, I think Marriage most adapted to secure the Felicity of that compound Being, Man, but in general the Image of God seems to be defaced in the human Species; for, alas! the Degeneracy extends to his choicest Workmanship, Woman. To the Idols Pleasure and Grandeur, both Sexes sacrifice their Time and their Duty. I wish to enter into an

B 3

Engage-

Engagement for Life, but the Bands of Matrimony are now become very diffoluble—The Ladies flip their conjugal Chain, and disclaim all Subjection but what wears the Semblance of Freedom. The Sexes seem to have changed Characters. The Ladies chuse to resign their natural Softness, and strut with the unblushing Air of masculine Effrontery; while the Men affect the swimming Gait, the gentle Voice of feminine Delicacy. How do the tender Sex deprive themselves of the Tribute of Respect due to Female Excellencies, by thus deserting their proper Sphere! Oh, *Wallace*, my Heart pants to gain an Interest in some gentle Breast, the Repository of every secret Care, the sure Asylum under every Distress. I should be the most miserable of human Beings, if I did not find in a Wife, the Friend, who would be as my own Soul—Our
Joys

Joys should be exalted by Reciproca-
 tion; I would endeavour to steal a-
 way every Grief. Except in this
 Particular, I wish not to have a sepa-
 rate Thought—Such a State prepares
 for Heaven. My Friend! I do not
 call it Liberty to expatiate at large
 in the wide Field of luxuriant Ima-
 gination, but to become the Votary
 of Reason and Religion—You find I
 am half in Love already, tho' with
 the mere Creation of my Fancy; I
 will endeavour to find the Original of
 this delightful Picture, and if I suc-
 ceed, she shall reign unrivaled in the
 Heart of

Your truly affectionate

RUTLAND.

B 4 L E T-

L E T T E R III.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE WALLACE, Esq;

YOU have often raillied me, dear *George*, on my Insensibility, and wished to see me captivated: Perhaps when you read the Tale I shall disclose, you will pronounce me entangled. But if I know my own Heart, it has yet entertained no Sentiments but those of Admiration and Compassion.

My Aunt *Castleton* left Town soon after you quitted it; I accompanied her Part of the Way, and we were arrived at the Inn where we were to part: Having conducted her to an Apartment, I went down to speak to a Gentleman of my Acquaintance, whom I saw alight from a Stage Coach. As soon as the first Civilities

ties were over ; “ I have happened of an odd Adventure this Morning, said he ; I came with one of the most charming Girls I ever saw, but one of the most melancholy and reserved : Her Mother is with her, and seems to be quite of a different Character. She is desirous of persuading the sweet Creature to relish some Scheme of Life which at present is quite disagreeable to her, but she cannot effect her Purpose. She gets no Answer but Sighs and Tears. I hope we shall be better acquainted.”

This Account excited in me Commiseration for the fair Sufferer. I knew that Mr. *Fuller* was gay to excess, and where he liked, would not scruple to transgress the Bounds of Honour. I feared for the young Lady, and could not help intreating my Aunt to see her, and to learn
from

from herself the Cause of her Distress. She accordingly enquired for the Company who came in the Coach, and hearing that the Person for whom we interested ourselves was walking alone in the Garden, my Aunt went immediately in search of her, and soon perceived her. Her Dress was only a white Callico Gown, her Linen coarse and plain; a large Hat concealed her Face. Her Handkerchief was at her Eyes, and she was so lost in Thought, that she started when my Aunt accosted her, and in the tenderest Manner enquired into the Occasion of her Uneasiness, offering her all the Assistance in her Power. The young Person, without raising her Eyes from the Ground, thanked her in a gentle tremulous Tone, but told her, the Nature of her Sufferings was such as could not be alleviated. Her
Grief

Grief then became audible, notwithstanding her Endeavours to suppress it, and my Aunt, shocked at the sight, intreated that she would attend her to a private Room, where they might consult on the Means of assisting her. The young Woman stood irresolute for several Minutes; at last, raising her Head, "Oh! Madam, said she, how you distress the wretched *Fanny Meadows* by your Goodness.— Yet, circumstanced as I am, surely it cannot be blameable to solicit your Advice. I will attend you."

They returned to the Room my Aunt had chosen, and she begged Miss *Meadows's* Confidence, repeating her Assurance of Assistance. The amiable Girl was silent, and her Countenance expressed the Agitation of her Mind. My Aunt again urged her, "Come, my dear Miss *Meadows*,
said

said she, the Time of our Conference must be short, as the Coach in which you came will soon be ready."—These Words determined her to speak: "Never, Madam, replied she, may I enter that Coach again, for if I be compelled to it, my Heart forebodes dreadful Consequences."—"What do you fear, Miss? returned my Aunt; is not your Mother with you?"—"Ah! Madam, answered she—then stopping a while, and clasping her Hands with Emotion—What you imagine to be my Security is the true Cause of my Apprehensions. My Mother will betray me! Distress of Circumstances, a Desire of Affluence, have reconciled her to a Sacrifice shocking beyond Expression!"—"Is it possible, my Dear? Can a Parent be so lost to Duty, and all Sense of Shame? What was your Situation in Life?"—"My Birth, Madam, is mean; my Father was only

only a Farmer. He has been dead some Months. We have known great Distress since his Death. My Mother was quite at a Loss what Way of Life to pursue, when a Sister of her's, who lives with a Lady in *London*, desired her to go to Town, and promised to procure me a Place, and to provide for her. This was the Information my Mother gave me, and she prepared for the Journey. I rejoiced at a Scheme which would give me an Opportunity not only of relieving my Mother from any Suffering on my Account, but of contributing to her future Ease. Judge then, Madam, the Surprize, the Shock, I felt, when this Morning she told me—The Place she had procured for me was—that of Mistress to a Nobleman, who would settle an Annuity on her, and allow me sufficient to answer the Appearance
his

his Dignity required—My Chariot—two Footmen — Diamonds — every thing that was thought necessary to excite female and youthful Vanity was mentioned, but my Heart spurns the horrid Proposal; I have thrown myself at my Mother's Feet—I have wept, intreated to return to Poverty with Innocence; but she is deaf to my Prayers. What will, what can become of me? And how deplorable would be the Situation of that Mother, who owed her Affluence to her Daughter's Guilt?"

Here she threw herself at my Aunt's Feet. "Oh! Madam, she cried, save me, for the Almighty's Sake save me."—She could add no more; my Aunt was deeply affected. "Good God! my Dear, said she, how I pity you: But be comforted. You shall not go to *London*. You shall live

live with me.—Do you like this, my sweet Girl?" She eagerly kissed my Aunt's Hand: "With You, Madam, did you say? Will you take Compassion on a poor, friendless, obscure Girl?—Then pausing—You know nothing of me but from Appearances. Indeed, indeed, Madam, I am innocent."—"I am convinced of it, answered my Aunt—but what shall we do about your Mother?"—"I will talk with her, Madam, said she, perhaps she will hear Reason; but I am determined I will refuse to go any further.

Mrs. *Meadows* was sent for, and the Matter explained.—She was extremely confused, hesitated, would have drawn away her Daughter, but was prevented. She was soon summoned to the Coach. Miss *Meadows* wept, again attempted to prevail on her

her Mother to return to the Country from whence she came, promising to endeavour to support her. My Aunt assured her, that if it was more agreeable to her Inclination, her Daughter should continue with her, and she would assist Mrs. *Meadows* in any honest Means of Subsistence: But the unhappy Woman, lost to Goodness, was not to be persuaded: She hastily left the Room, threw herself into the Coach, and left Miss *Meadows* in a Situation not to be described.

My Aunt sent for me, the Dinner she had ordered being ready. Miss *Meadows*'s Appearance preposessed me in her Favour. Her Features are not perhaps exactly regular, but there is such a becoming Sensibility in her fine Eyes, such glowing Delicacy diffused over her sweet Coun-

Countenance, that it is impossible to behold her without tender Admiration. The Uneasiness she still felt on parting from her Mother, the Trial which occasioned this Necessity, the Obligations she was under to my Aunt's Goodness; all these Emotions operated too powerfully to be supported, and she sunk back in her Chair in a Swoon. I think I never was so much affected. It was not merely her Person, but her Distress chiefly which influenced me in her Favour. I assisted my Aunt in recovering her, and our Cares were soon rewarded by Success. She opened her Eyes, shed a Flood of Tears, and then gratefully kissing my Aunt's Hand, "How, Madam, (said she,) can I express the Sense I have of your Goodness! To you too, Sir, my Thanks are due for your Solitude; but here I am so much obliged, that

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I def-

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I def-

I despair.”—“No more, my Dear, interrupted my Aunt, I insist upon your Silence on that Subject, but tell me how you acquired such a settled Abhorrence of Vice, when your Mother’s Principles might naturally have disposed you to it. Virtue, indeed, may be the Growth of every Soil, but where there have been no Pains taken to cultivate it, it is not likely to flourish. Your’s, my Dear, is ornamented Virtue.”—“Ah! Madam, answered she, I have had Advantages which would leave me inexcusable, if I had not profited by them.”—A young Lady, who lived near my Father’s Cottage, saw something in me that pleased her, and insisted on my being her constant Companion whenever my Mother did not want me as her Assistant. Never was there a more amiable Woman. From her I learned all that is valuable in me.

How

How I lament the Necessity that parted us! Her Father's declining Health obliged him to go to the South of *France*, and my excellent Friend is gone with him. Had she continued in the Country, I should not have suffered, perhaps, as I have done. Her Friendship was to me a constant Source of the most rational Delight. Expression falls far short of what I feel, yet I could not help enlarging upon the Subject.—As to my poor Mother, indeed, Madam, she was a good Wife, and a kind Parent, till Poverty on one Hand, and the Offer of Affluence on the other, weakened her Resolution. My sweet young Friend left *England* before my Father's Death, which happened about two Months since; I have not acquainted her with it, as I knew not where to direct to her.

My Aunt embraced Miss *Meadows* tenderly, and promised to protect and support her. She then ordered her Chariot, and I took my Leave of them—with Reluctance, I own to you; but as I had not proposed to go any farther, I was certain my Aunt would have imputed a Change of Measures to a new-born Passion, and yet if she had, I assure you she would have conjectured more than I felt; for though I admire, pity, and reverence Miss *Meadows*, I am yet a Stranger to Love.

What a Mother, *Wallace*, has this amiable Girl! How can any one so entirely divest herself of maternal Tendernefs, be so lost to all the Calls of Humanity, every Dictate of Christianity, as to sacrifice a Child, an Innocent! Thanks to Providence, that directed us to the Place, and that inspired

spired my Aunt with the Determination of saving such exalted, and endangered Virtue!

My Heart is free, *George*, absolutely free. Learn to place a Guard upon your's. Can you never admire without Passion? We will endeavour to form no Attachments but such as Reason shall approve.

I am

Yours sincerely,

RUTLAND.

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L E T-

L E T T E R IV.

FANNY MEADOWS to LUCY MILLES.

MY Dear *Lucy* expected from me a Description of the Charms of *London*, and of my particular Happiness in being placed amidst them. Ah! my Friend, I was indeed invited to share them in a much higher Degree than I ever had Reason to expect. Does not your gay ambitious Heart flutter for me? Happy Girl! methinks I hear you say! But do not judge too hastily, nor from Appearances. What was to have been the Sacrifice? Virtue. I was to have been the Mistress of a Nobleman. The Right Honourable Peer would have condescended to a poor Cottager. I was told that he would deign to enoble my Meanness. What an Abuse

use of Language! I had sufficient Strength of Mind to resist the Temptation. Believe me, my Dear, when I call Heaven to witness, the Struggle did not arise from my Fondness of Grandeur, but from the Opposition of my Mother. Alas! she was intoxicated by the Proposal. She endeavoured to engage my Imagination, by describing, in the most dazzling Colours, the Splendours I was desired to accept; I can't express the Shock it gave me, when I found all Hopes of supporting my Mother and myself, by virtuous Industry, frustrated. I claim no Merit in refusing Greatness; I practised no Self-denial. My Heart never was attracted by Finery or Pomp. You know I never chose to be admitted into the Company who visited my dear Miss *Piercy*, tho' she often solicited me. I enjoyed

her Conversation ; we read, we worked, we walked together, but I always refused to share the Society of her Equals in Rank. Ah ! how few are equal to her in Goodness !

My Mother reserved the shocking Information till we reached the Stage where we breakfasted. Horrid Tale ! My Heart was so oppressed, that I could scarcely speak a Word all the Way from R—— to C——. A young Gentleman in the Coach was very attentive to me, but (pardon the seeming Vanity) his Looks shewed more of Passion than Pity. His Discourse was offensive to Delicacy, and my Mother did not discourage it. Perhaps she hoped it would insensibly allure me to the Choice of splendid Guilt. Oh ! filial Love, how dost thou suffer ! When we stopped at Dinner, I hastened into the Garden to indulge my Sorrows,

Sorrows, and to think of some Means of escaping the Snares laid for me. Whilst I was walking, half distracted with Apprehensions, a Lady, who had heard my Distress from the Fellow Traveller who had alarmed me, came to me, enquired into my Story, offered me her Protection, and insisted on my Mother's leaving me with her, promising to assist her if she would return home. I wept, intreated, but in vain. Poor dear unhappy deceived Woman, she left me in Resentment. Had it been my Life she had requested, instead of my Virtue, I would have given it up with Joy to have made her happy; but could she be really happy if her Daughter chose to be wicked? And was there no other Alternative than starving by Virtue, or becoming rich by a Crime? Oh! I would have endured any Labour, any Hardship, rather than she should have

have wanted Necessaries, but I could not have confirmed her sad Choice.

What did I suffer when we parted ! But could I have done otherwise, my *Lucy* ? My kind Benefactress introduced me to her Nephew, an amiable young Nobleman. With what tender Compassion did he join with his Aunt, in endeavouring to sooth my Affliction ! My Spirits could not support it. I fainted. Lord *Rutland* assisted me ; but how different was his Manner from that of the Gentleman with whom I had travelled ! 'Twas true Benevolence, unaffected Sympathy. He soon took Leave of us, as he was only to attend his Aunt part of the Journey.

I am now at ——, with a Mrs. *Castleton*, who studies to amuse me, and dissipate my Melancholy. But can I be chearful ? Is it possible for me

me to forget my Mother's Change of Sentiment? No, my *Lucy*, it is not possible. Mrs. *Castleton* treats me as her Companion, as her Friend. Her Woman being about to leave her, I have begged that she would accept my Services in her Place, but she will not hear of it. I have obtained Permission to work for her, and as her Eyes are bad, she likes my reading to her, and talks of employing me to write for her. I shall rejoice to be serviceable to her in every Respect. I am capable, and should enjoy my Situation, if my Mother was in her little Cottage. My Benefactress would have been much too liberal; but I have set some Bounds to her Goodness. She would not hear of less, nor would I accept of more than 10*l.* a Year, and I have promised her, that if I can prevail upon my poor dear Mother to be recon-

reconciled to me, and to give up her Scheme, I will apply to her for what may be necessary for her Support.

This, my dear *Lucy*, is the Result of my Journey. You thought me a happy Mortal, and I was satisfied with my Prospects. Short-sighted Creatures! But I thank Heaven for preserving me from Guilt, and for conducting me to this Place of Safety. Farewell! be contented with your Country Life.—If it has not the Pleasures you wish to partake, it has those which are more innocent, and it is free from the Dangers with which *London* abounds. You will not now, surely, call me your *too grave* Friend, for I write only what I find to be true. Custom and Fashion were both mentioned as Reasons for my Compliance. Think yourself happy, then, my dear *Lucy*,
and

FANNY MEADOWS. 29

and instead of wishing to live in *London*, consent to become Mr. *Jesfery's* Wife, and settle in your native Place. This Advice proceeds from the Heart of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

FRANCES MEADOWS.

I. E. T.

L E T T E R V.

LUCY MILLES to FANNY
MEADOWS.

I Pity you very much, my dear *Fanny*. You have suffered a vast deal, and you have shewn yourself a truly virtuous Girl. I doubt I should not have behaved so well. What! you was to have had a Chariot, and Servants, and fine Cloaths, and Jewels.—What pity that you could not have all these, and be innocent. I could not have thought your Mother would have asked you to do a wrong thing.—But sure if so many people who have lived a long time in *London*, and must know a great deal of the World, do live in such a Manner, if it is the *Fashion*, as you say, and the *Custom*, why it
can't

can't be so wrong as we have thought it. We are poor ignorant Creatures in the Country so far from Town. You indeed, by being with Miss *Piercy*, have learned a good deal of what polite People do; but then she did not love *London*, and might not mix much with *very fashionable* Company when she was there. Now, my Dear, after all, don't you think it would be better to be the Mistress of a Lord, than the Wife of such a one as *John Jeffery*? I don't know whether you will be pleased with me, and I am half afraid of writing my Mind so freely, but when I hear you have had such Offers, and that your Mother would have persuaded you to accept them, and that *other* People, and *very genteel* People, do not think 'tis a Fault, why I wish you to think a little more about it.

it. Perhaps too, you may have such another Propofal; for this Lord *Rutland*, very likely, tho' he feemed only to pity you, may be in Love with you, and as you feem to like him, I beg that you would confider of the Matter, that you may be prepared with an Answer.—I durst not have *said* fo much to you, for tho' I *love* you, yet I *fear* you too; I have always thought you vastly better than myfelf, and I believe your being fo much with Mifs *Piercy* is the Reason, for you must be improved by her Difcourfe. Don't think I mean that you were ever proud, and gave yourfelf any *Airs*, for I never faw any one more humble. To be fure, you have had Lovers enough (tho' indeed they were forry Creatures, the beft of them) to make moft Girls vain. Don't be angry, but think of what
I have

I have wrote. Excuse this poor Scrawl. You know I am not much used to writing Letters, tho' you took a great deal of Pains to teach me a tolerable Hand. Believe that I am, my dear *Fanny*,

Your ever affectionate

LUCY MILLES.

L E T T E R VI.

FANNY MEADOWS *to* LUCY
MILLES.

I Rejoice to find you still love me; my dear *Lucy*, and yet your Letter gave me more Pain than Pleasure. You are so dazzled with the Tinsel of Finery and Grandeur, that you will not attempt to distinguish between Virtue and Fashion. You would follow a Multitude to do Evil; or, I should rather say, you think the Great and Polite cannot do amiss. Oh! my Dear, you know better, if you would place things in a proper Light. You love Mr. *Jeffery*; would you consent to live with him as a Mistress? He can make you no Return, you say, for the Sacrifice. Does Virtue bear
a Price,

a Price, then, and may it be parted with for an Equipage and Shew? Are these Equivalents?—If you would not give up Virtue from Tenderneſs, and Affection, could you be prevailed upon to reſign it from mercenary Motives.—What has Faſhion or Cuſtom to do with the Duties of Life? If the genteel Part of the World act right, let us imitate them; if they err, ſhall we part from our Reaſon, and offend againſt our Duty, from mere Complaiſance? No, my *Lucy*, unhappy and very faulty is ſhe who tranſgreſſes Virtue from the Violence of Love; but much more wretched and criminal is ſhe who forſakes it, to gratify a Paſſion for Wealth and Splendour.

As for Love, I never felt its Power. You think that Lord *Rut-*

land may make me sensible of it; but I owed his Assistance to his Compassion only, I will answer for it, and I should not have so good an Opinion of him, if I thought otherwise of the Motive of his Actions. A Woman in Love, I have often heard, is wholly in the Power of the Man she loves; God knows how I should behave if I was so, but I pray to be preserved from any Attachment, which would endanger my Duty, and my Peace.

I have written to my Mother, but have received no Answer. This is a Weight upon my Mind. As to Mrs. *Castleton*, her Goodness to me increases every Day. I endeavour to assume Chearfulness, lest she should suspect me of Ingratitude; but, indeed, she kindly allows for my Situation, and often converses with
me

me on the Subject nearest my Heart. I am working her a Suit of Muslin; but lest I should indulge my Thoughts too much, she interrupts me, to desire I would go on with some entertaining Book. My Obligations to her are inexpressible.

You say nothing of Mr. *Jeffery*. Indeed you can't do better than to oblige your Father and Mother, and, I may say, indulge your own real Inclination, by marrying him.—He is a very good young Man, and, I dare say, will make an excellent Husband. Do, my Dear, resolve upon it, let me know your happy Day, and you will give real Joy to

Your sincerely affectionate

FANNY MEADOWS.

D 3

LET-

L E T T E R VII.

FANNY MEADOWS to Mrs.
MEADOWS.

WHY would not my dearest Mother consent to remain in our peaceful Cottage, and to grant to her Child the Satisfaction of supporting her? Let me hope that you will pardon my Importunity in intreating that you would leave *London*, and not be indebted for the smallest Relief to the Person, who could propose to rob you of your Daughter's Virtue. I know you wished to raise me to a higher Rank in Life, but I have not the least Inclination to become great, nor indeed do I see how any one can justly be called so who is not truly good. I always loved Retirement, and enjoyed the Duties of my
humble

humble Station. You were formerly contented with our Manner of Life, and I had no Fears but that Illness should deprive me of the Power of working for our Maintenance; tho' I did not give Way to these Fears, as it would have shewn a blameable Distrust of Providence. My kind, my generous Benefactress, offered to support you, and she has promised to indulge me, by placing you in a pretty neat Cottage of her's, which is ready furnished. Do, my beloved, my dearest Mother, accept this Proposal. The little Hut is not a Quarter of a Mile distant.

What can splendid Vice offer more than we can enjoy with humble Virtue. My excellent Patroness has, by her Liberality, prevented my Apprehensions of Want.—She is all Goodness. Write to me immediately;

D 4

dear

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dear Mother, relieve my Anxiety ; for
our Separation, and the Cause of
it, wound very sensibly the Heart of

Your ever dutiful

and affectionate

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LET

L E T T E R VIII.

Mrs. CASTLETON to Lord RUTLAND.

I Expected to have seen you before this Time, my dear Nephew. You told me that a Month should be the longest Time of your delaying your Visit; yet it is more than two since we parted. I beg I may see you in a Week; Mr. *Morgan* has been down more than a Fortnight, and wonders you are not arrived.

My amiable Rustic is become very dear to me. She is a truly pious, virtuous, and discreet young Creature: She does not chuse to see any Company, and particularly avoids being seen by any young Gentlemen: Mr. *Morgan* sent in his Name the other
Day,

Day, and when I told the Servant to shew him up, she rose immediately. I asked her if she would not stay?—"Do not think me vain, Madam, (answered she,) because I am fearful. My peculiar Situation endangers me; Youth and Novelty are Charms to the other Sex."—I made no Objections to her going, and she retired.—She must have made great Advantage of her Opportunities, for she reads justly, works elegantly, writes a fine Hand, and an easy Stile. Her Mother's Depravity sits heavy upon her: She has written to her, but heard nothing from her. This has increased her Affliction, yet she tries to appear chearful, that her Grief may not affect, nor be troublesome to me. She is really a most amiable Creature. The Servants love her exceedingly. She is always desirous of obliging them, works for them, and endears herself

herself to them by a thousand little Services. As a Proof of her Humility and Kindness I must give you the following Instance. I generally walk, you know, every Evening. I called for *Fanny* last Night; but she was not to be found. I looked for her all over the Garden; at last, passing thro' the Grove by the Milking Yard, I observed my *Fanny* busily employed in Milking; I called her, and she told me, that poor *Betty* had been taken ill, and did not know how to finish her Employment, therefore she had offered to assist her. I was delighted with her compassionate Disposition, and went into the Yard, where I was charmed to observe her Readiness in the Discharge of the Office she had undertaken.—She is exactly the Companion I wanted.

As

As you know I don't love writing, you will excuse a short Letter from

Your truly affectionate Aunt,

MARIANNE CASTLETON.

LET-

LETTER IX.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE WALLACE, *Esq*;

SO I must be particular, my dear *Wallace*, in my Account of the amiable *Fanny Meadows*, and you insist upon hearing all the Gradations of my Passion. Compassion for such an Object, you say, will excite a more tender Sensibility in my Heart. I thank you for your good Opinion, but I assure you these Emotions are not so nearly allied as you imagine. I do feel for her; I pity her most sincerely. When she has left us a while, and on her return I see her charming Eyes red, and swelled with weeping, my Sensibility is awakened, I wish her happy, I desire to make her so, but I have never yet thought of

of joining my Destiny with her's. My Aunt's Conduct, in respect to this amiable Girl, is truly tender and affectionate. I am more attached to her than ever, for she has that true Benevolence which does not merely consist in the Relief of Distress, but in such a Sympathy as prompts the tenderest Manner of Assistance.

When I arrived at N——, I found my Aunt alone. I asked, soon after I was seated, for her young Companion; she told me she was in the Garden, and as it was her own usual Time of walking, proposed to take a Turn. I accompanied her, and we met the lovely *Fanny* on our Entrance. I accosted her with the Respect due to her Character, and she returned my Civility with a Modesty and Grace equally peculiar to it. She still retained the Simplicity of her
Appear-

Appearance. Nothing that had the Semblance of Finery was to be seen in her Dress. My Aunt had informed me, that she could not prevail upon her to accept a Silk Gown, or any better Linen. She did not wish, she said, to see, but to avoid Company, and if my Aunt did not dislike her Apparel, she was desirous not to change it.

When we came back to the House she offered to withdraw, but my Aunt told her that she must not rank me amongst common Acquaintance; that I was her real Friend; and, as I intended to stay some Time in the Country, she wished her *Fanny* to be of the Party whenever they had no other Company. The sweet Girl blushed Acquiescence, and, with a modest Courtesy, said, she would return in a few Minutes. As soon as she was gone,

gone, my Aunt, addressing herself to me, said, “ If I did not know your Principles, my dear Nephew, and that you are incapable of a dishonourable Action, I should be fearful that *Fanny’s* personal and mental Charms should make an undue Impression upon your Heart. Her Merit is very great, but there are unsurmountable Obstacles to an Alliance with her; and as to the loose Manners of the Age, you are superior to them. I gave her the most sincere Assurances that my Heart was not interested in *Fanny’s* Favour. I acknowledged I felt Admiration, Pity, and Reverence for her, but no more than I thought every Person must, who was capable of the smallest Degree of Sensibility.

I had scarce ended, when the humble Fair One returned. She sat down

to

to her Work, while my Aunt and I entered into Discourse. Since the first Evening, when we have been quite alone, I have always taken up a Book, and read aloud. I join their Walks, I sometimes play on the *German Flute*, or *Harpfichord*, while *Fanny* sings, for she has a most melodious Voice. My Aunt is fond of Music. My Time passes very agreeably.

The neighbouring Gentlemen, who have heard of *Fanny*, often railly me on her Account, and I find it impossible to persuade them I have no Designs upon her; I really resented the Imputation; but Sir *John Welwood*, who is now in the Country, laughed at me for such *sanctified Pretences*, as he called them. Oh! *Wallace*, how much do even the valuable Part of the Female Sex lose of the Vene-

ration due to them, by the slight Manner in which they mention the most atrocious Crimes of our's. A Man known to be a Deceiver, those who glory in guilty Indulgences, shall be received by all Companies, with the same Marks of Respect shewn to him whose Character is really estimable! Why will a virtuous Woman condemn a weak Sister, and yet admit to a Familiarity of Acquaintance the Wretch who was the Betrayer? Certainly, to prevent the Increase of Vice, we must discountenance the Vicious, but our Disapprobation should then be general.

Once again I repeat, that I am not a Lover of *Fanny Meadows*; I am a sincere Admirer of her Virtues, and feel an adequate Esteem. Trust me, whilst I know my own Heart, it
shall

shall be communicated to you; for are we not Friends, and does not that sacred Name include perfect Confidence? Never shall you have Reason to complain of any Reserve from

Your faithful and affectionate

RUTLAND.

LETTER X.

GEO. WALLACE, *Esq;* to Lord
RUTLAND.

YOU are not in Love then, my dear Lord.—Granted. For I ought to have no Doubts when you are certain. Only examine yourself daily, lest this dangerous little Intruder should insinuate himself imperceptibly, and pass himself upon you for Friendship, whose Garb he may possibly assume. You are not at all acquainted with him, you know, so consequently are more liable to Deception. With me he is an Intimate, therefore I forewarn you. He has given me many Assaults. Indeed, my Lord, he has, and yet
I will

I will confess sincerely, I believe he has only stormed the Outworks, and never took absolute Possession of the Citadel. He lay concealed in a bright Eye, or a Dimple, and infested me most wonderfully with his Darts; but now I know the little Rogue, and his Tricks, I will be invulnerable to such Attacks, and if he wounds me again, it shall be from a Station in the Female Mind, and I will yield up to him the inmost Recesses of my Heart.

I admire this modest, amiable Girl.—I am half in Love with her by Report. What say you, my Lord?—Will you give me Leave to repair the Injustice of Fortune, by making her my Wife? Yet, if you have no Objections, and I was even to be in Love, I don't know whether I could conquer an Atten-

tion to the World's Opinion. I live a strange kind of, as it were—without you. You have made me absolutely indifferent, or rather given me a Disgust, to all the Tribe of Insignificants with whom I used to be intimate, and there is at present a perfect Interregnum in my Breast, with Regard to the Female Succession. I had once Thoughts of Miss *Lydia Melvyn* since her Sister's Marriage; for the hereditary Right is with some indisputable; but she has not the Qualities I wish to find in the Sovereign of my Heart: And Beauty, tho' a strong Persuasive, shall plead in vain; unless I can grant my Esteem, I will be “dumb, insensible, and blind.”

This, let me tell you, will be a great Conquest, but the Wish to secure, by deserving your Affection, methinks exalts my Value. Continue
it

FANNY MEADOWS. 55

it to me, I intreat, or you will
deprive, of one of his best Mo-
tives to Improvement,

Your sincerely devoted Friend,

GEORGE WALLACE.

E 4 LET.

LETTER XI.

LUCY MILLES to FANNY
MEADOWS.

O H! my Dear, I am almost out of Breath with Joy. Such a Conquest—I could not have thought of such a thing.—One Sir *Thomas Gresham*, who is come down to Mr. *Seaman's*, has seen me, and is so in Love, he don't know how to live out of my Sight. My Mother, who is delighted with your Letter, is frighted to Death about this young Gentleman, who walked home with me from Mr. *Seaman's* one Evening, and has followed me every where ever since. She won't let me stir out. She knows my Love of Shew, she says, and she is afraid Sir *Thomas* should tempt me
to

to accept it at too dear a Price. Fain would she have me promise to marry *Jeffery*, but I can't endure the Thoughts of him. How could you suppose, *Fanny*, that I love him. Love *him*, indeed; a *vulgar, low-lived Fellow*! No, I'll never consent to marry him, that's certain. I was so ashamed last Night, I did not know how to bear it. My Mother and I were coming in from turning out the Cows, when Sir *Thomas* rode past, in the sweetest gilt Chariot that ever was seen, with four fine prancing Horses, and two Footmen on Horseback. Lud! how did my Heart go pit-a-pat. He pulled off his Hat to me very low. I was court'ying, when that odious Creature *Jeffery* came behind me, put one Arm about me, and caught hold of my Hand. There never was such a Fright seen neither,

Fanny.

Fanny. 'Twas very hot, he had pulled off his Wig, and bound a red Handkerchief about his Head. His Face was as red as his Handkerchief, and great Drops of Sweat stood thick upon it. Another thick red Handkerchief was tied about his Neck.—And to have Sir *Thomas* see one pulled over by such a nasty Wretch—I could have killed him. I did twitch away my Hand, and got out of his horrid Clutches. Sir *Thomas* kept looking back, till the Turn of the Road hindered his seeing me. My Mother is downright angry with me, and so is my Father. They tell me, I shall not stir out alone while this great Man stays in the Country. He is a sweet Creature, and very rich, it seems. Oh! dear, how happy his Lady will be. She may dress as fine as Hands can make her, may shine

as bright as the Sun with Diamonds,
and always go out in her Coach.
Then to be called *my Lady*, and
your Ladyship, at every Word.
Well, some People are born to
good Fortune. You are a very
good young Woman, and what you
have wrote is all very true, to be
sure. And it would break one's
Heart to be left by such a Man
as this, and to be turned out from
a fine House, and from riding in
a Coach, to walking about the
Streets, and to have lost one's good
Name, as you say, so that Nobody
of Character would take one in.
But sure that can't be the Case,
tho', my Dear.—Only if I was to
be turned off by such a great Man,
People would think I must have
behaved ill, not that 'twas only
because he didn't love me any longer.

Well,

Well, I don't know what to do. He told me last Week I should have a fine Coach and Servants, and I don't know what fine things. Perhaps he may mean to marry me. What would you say then, *Fanny*? He has no Father or Mother to ask leave of. Oh! bless me, if He should make me a Lady, indeed! I'll tell you what; I am determined I will not part with my Honour. For as my Mother says, and you tell me, that might be the Destruction of my Soul and Body. And then, who knows, but when he finds he can't make me his Mistress, he may resolve to make me his Wife. If he should not—Heigh! ho! but I shall be virtuous, that will be some Comfort, and I can have *Jeffery* at any Time, tho' I protest I believe I should rather chuse to live single.

Good

FANNY MEADOWS. 61

Good Night, my dear *Fanny*. My Mother desires me to remember her Love and good Wishes to you. Accept them, too, from

Your true Friend,

LUCY MILLES.

LET.

LETTER XII.

FANNY MEADOWS to LUCY
MILLES.

EXCUSE me, my Dear, if I join my Intreaties to those of your good Parents, that you would not encourage Sir *Thomas*. Indeed, my *Lucy*, I am afraid he does not mean honourably, at least it is safer in this Case to suspect, than to be secure, or even to indulge Hopes; for suppose this young Baronet could be so unmindful of the Regard usually paid to the Opinion of the World, as to determine upon marrying you, I think it very doubtful whether you would be so happy as with honest Mr. *Jeffery*. You are astonished at my Stupidity, or
you

you accuse me, perhaps, of Envy ; but consider, my Dear, the Difference of Rank you would have to support. You are unacquainted with the Manners of High Life, and your Inexperience might disgust the great People amongst whom you would live, and perhaps withdraw from you the Affections of your Husband. You know nothing of his Disposition, or Morals. You would not marry one of your own Degree who was a Stranger to you ; why then, my dear *Lucy*, will you conclude, that Rank, Title, and Fortune must necessarily confer Happiness ? I repeat, that, in my Opinion, it is most likely, from our Station and Manner of Life, that we should be happy with our Equals. Do not impute my Cautions and Fears to Envy, or natural Want of Charity. I assure you my Advice proceeds from my Affection.

My

My Love, Esteem, and Gratitude towards Mrs. *Castleton* increase daily. Lord *Rutland* is now with us, and is the most amiable of Men. Indeed, my Knowledge is not very extensive, but I admire that, amidst the Gaieties and Dissipations of Life, he has preserved the utmost Benevolence of Heart, and the strongest Impressions of Piety. You will immediately conclude that I am in Love; but is it impossible to feel Veneration for great Qualities, without indulging a less noble Passion? I *reverence* Lord *Rutland*. Yes, *Lucy*, strange as the Expression may sound *from* a young Girl, and *of* a young Man, I *reverence* him. I listen to his Discourse with Delight, and I gather Instruction from every Sentiment.—But how vain may I appear in disclaiming a Regard which any one but yourself would term the Height of Arrogance.

gance. Who would have *suspected* that the poor Cottager, *Fanny Meadows*, should dare to encourage a tender Idea of one so much her Superior? Only you, my Dear, could have supposed such a thing, but I know *you* will. Your own Thoughts have rambled so much into high Life, that you have too contemptible an Opinion of a mean Station; and because *you* wish to be, and would have me be happy, you think we must be great. No, my Dear, we are much more likely to find our Happiness in discharging the Duties of our Station.

I must add, that Lord *Rutland's* Behaviour to me is tender and compassionate, without shewing the least Attachment to my Person. Thank Heaven, I have nothing to fear from him, and, I assure you, I do not entertain a single Hope.

I have heard nothing of my poor Mother. How bitter must be her Reflections! I feel for her. Can a Child be happy, while her Parent is separated from her on so shocking an Occasion? My Heart and Eyes are so full, I can write no more, than that I am, dear *Lucy*,

Yours faithfully,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE WALLACE, Esq;

TO own a Truth, *Wallace*, which I promised not to conceal, I am really afraid I love, and that I love *Fanny Meadows*. Jealousy has taught me to examine my Heart, and I find too much Cause for Suspicion.—Mr. *Morgan* came in the other Morning unexpectedly, when I was reading to my Aunt and *Fanny*. The latter could not immediately leave the Room, and his earnest Looks sufficiently informed me, that the Reason of his abrupt Entrance was his Desire of surprizing *Fanny* with us. Indeed, his Words were afterwards too declaratory of his Purpose: “This is a Happiness I have long wished for, Miss *Meadows*,

dows, (said he,) but you never would indulge me. What can you wish to hide that sweet Face for? By my Soul, I never saw one so charming amongst those who are most desirous of shewing themselves." *Fanny* was confused. My Aunt observing her, told him, he should remember this young Person was not so much accustomed to Compliments as the Ladies of whom he spoke, nor so ready at Repartee."—"Retire, my Dear, (she continued,) if it be most agreeable to you." She went out immediately. "*Fanny Meadows*, Sir, (added my Aunt,) is my Companion. Misfortunes have involved her in Melancholy, and she naturally loves Retirement. She chuses to see none but my Family."—"I protest, my Lord, (said Mr. *Morgan*,) I never envied you before, but I now think you the

the happiest of Men. I wish you would admit me into your Party.”—

“ You would think it a very dull one, Sir, (answered I;)—Miss *Meadows* is remarkably grave, and this Disposition would not suit your volatile Turn.”—“ Oh! every Disposition must please in so lovely a Creature. Do, let her come down again.”—“ I assure you she does not chuse it. She is her own Mistress. It is her own Inclination she pursues.”—“ Well! since it must be so, give me your Company, my Lord, for a few Turns in the Garden, and I shall then go Home again.” As we walked, he raillied me most unmercifully on *Fanny’s* Account. It was in vain to protest against any Designs upon her: I was not believed, and he chose to consider me as a *Villain*, because, he said, he was unwilling to think

me a *Simpleton*. Such is the Opinion of some Part of the World; I will not say the greater Part, because I am unwilling to imagine that Human Nature is in general so depraved. When I found I could not gain Credit, I chose to be silent, and we soon parted with a mutual Contempt. His Solicitude about *Fanny*, and her modest unaffected Embarrassment, have discovered the Extent of my Attachment to her.

Wallace! I do love her. There is an irresistable Sweetness in her Endeavours to oblige. Not a Servant in the Family but doats upon her. Far from envying the Favours she receives, they endeavour to increase my Aunt's Affection for her. What is Birth, what is Fortune, compared to the Merit she possesses? My Soul
spurns

spurns them. *Fanny* alone can make me happy. Her Understanding, quick and piercing, has been improved by a judicious Choice of Books. Her Observations are truly sensible and acute. I never yet traced such universal Benevolence, so animating, so rational a Piety. The Purity of her Manners, is evinced by every Action of her Life; I have ventured to talk with her of Love—I have asked her whether her Heart was ever susceptible of the tender Passion? She blushed, but answered, without Hesitation, that she had never seen any Man with whom she wished to pass her Life. Ah! my *Fanny*, how exquisitely happy will he be, who can inspire you with Sensibility of his Tendernefs! What a Treasure will he possess, who secures the Affection of so valuable a Heart! But do not

I indulge the Fallacy of Hope, when the Inequality of our Stations ought to repress the Dawn of Inclination? Did not my good Aunt endeavour to guard my Heart from receiving an Impression from *Fanny's* Charms? But why will she so far comply with the Customs of the World, as to wish me to prefer the Chimeras of Fashion to the Dictates of Reason, and the Essentials of Happiness? My Friend, I must know whether the Person whom I believe *Fanny* honours with her Esteem, can hope to obtain a Place in her Heart! If she gives me a Shadow of Hope, I will confess to my Aunt my Attachment, remove every Obstacle she can suggest, and force her to confess, that Rank and Fortune are light and contemptible, when weighed against the intrinsic Dignity of Virtue, and the inexhaustible Treasures of the Mind.

Mind. Does not *Fanny Meadows* excel in every pleasing Accomplishment, as well as in every valuable Qualification? And shall I endeavour to subdue my Passion, because the Object of it can bring no Dowry of those adventitious Charms, which, in Reality, confer no Lustre on the Possessor, and of which I have a Superfluity?

Wallace! I will not permit others to be Judges of what will constitute my Happiness. I know, I feel that it depends on her. I cannot yet determine whether to speak or write to her—You find my Confidence in your Affection is unlimited. Tell me you approve my Passion, and believe that my Heart shall never be so absorbed by Love, as to forget the Charms of Friendship.

Ever most faithfully yours,

RUTLAND.

L E T T E R XIV.

FANNY MEADOWS *to* LUCY
MILLES.

COULD you have imagined it possible, my dear *Lucy*, that with the real Evils I have to encounter, I should indulge the Torments of Imagination? With what fantastic Alarms do you think I have added to the Weight of my Affliction? I have for some Time been fearful—but I must assuredly be mistaken—that I have suffered myself to fall in Love—In my Situation to be in Love!—and with whom?—Alas! my Dear, I suspected myself to be foolish enough to entertain a too tender Regard for Lord *Rutland*. Do you not reproach my Vanity, or do you only laugh at my Folly? But it is not Vanity, is it, to contemplate the Perfections of the
most

most amiable of Men, till you are apprehensive that your Heart is of the same Party with your Judgment? Lord *Rutland's* Character is truly excellent, his Manners are gentle and unassuming, his Charity extensive, and without Ostentation, his Piety regular, and unconstrained. His Conversation is polite; but that Word poorly expresses the Pleasure it imparts. He possesses that true Politeness, which delights in communicating Instruction to the Ignorant, in relieving the Fears of the Diffident, and in diffusing Ease and Pleasure to all around him. Is it in Human Nature, my *Lucy*, to observe the Superiority of this Man, and to deny him a Share in one's Regard? His Behaviour to me has been that of a kind Brother, of an affectionate Friend. He sympathizes in my Uneasiness; he blames, yet pities the Weakness of
my

my Mother. Must not such a Man be beloved by every one who knows him? I accused my Heart too soon of a faulty Partiality. I only feel the Sentiments of an admiring World, and my particular Situation inspires me with Fears. I will tell you, my Dear, what made me turn my Thoughts to Self Examination on this Account. Lord *Rutland* introduced the Subject of Love. He asked me if I had ever been sensible of its Power. I am conscious of being covered with Blushes at the Question, and I am not certain that my Answer was intelligible. It was sincere, however, for, as I told him, I have not seen the Man with whom I wish to pass my Life. Why did I blush! Why did I feel an Emotion at the Name of Love? It was the Suddenness of the Question—I should have been confused had it been made
by

by any other Man. I am happy in his Company, and feel uneasy in his Absence; but is it not natural to be avaricious of the Enjoyment of such Conversation? My Benefactress and Lord *Rutland* are all the World to me. I neither see, nor wish to be acquainted with any other.

* * * * *

I have laid down my Pen, examined, and re-examined my own Heart, and, I *think*, I can acquit it of harbouring an improper Guest. Yet, *Lucy*, I will be watchful. A fancied Security is perhaps more dangerous than a causeless Distrust.—But I have taken up too much of your Time about my Fears and Follies.

I hope Sir *Thomas* has left the Country, and that your Displeasure against Mr. *Jeffery*, for a Behaviour
not

not quite defensible, has given place to milder Sentiments; I shall rejoice to hear he is restored to your Favour. My kind Protectress calls me to walk. Adieu! then, my Dear.

Ever Yours,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LET-

LETTER XV.

Lord RUTLAND to FANNY
MEADOWS.

WITH an Heart deeply sensible of the Perfections of the amiable *Fanny Meadows*, I venture to address her on a Subject, with which she tells me she has been hitherto unacquainted. May I hope that it will be in my Power to inspire you, my lovely Girl, with a Preference in my Favour? My Passion dictates the most explicit Declaration, lest the Inequality of our Stations should awaken Doubts of the Sincerity of my Intentions. Till I knew you, my dearest *Fanny*, I had never felt more than a transient Liking for any of your Sex. Your Person excited my Admiration; your Misfortunes, my tenderest Sympathy;

your

your filial Piety, exalted Purity, and unrepining Resignation, inspired me with the highest Degree of Reverence and Esteem; yet for a Time I felt no softer Attachment. But who could see you constantly, and preserve his Freedom? Your amiable Humility, blended with true Dignity; your refined Understanding, not only improved beyond your apparent Opportunities, but so visibly superior to the Generality of your Sex, gave me a more rational Delight in your Conversation, than I had ever before enjoyed. This Gratification protracted my Stay. I could not support the Thoughts of parting from you. Never did I enjoy any Time so much as those happy Moments I have passed with you. Tell me, my *Fanny*, has your Heart really felt no Emotions of Love for another, and can you regard with Favour the Man
whose

whose temporal Felicity depends on his inspiring you with a mutual Passion? My Aunt loves, esteems, reverences you. Her Reason will rejoice to find her Nephew can prefer the real Claims of Merit, to the imaginary Rights of Rank and Fortune. The false Notions of interested Attachments cannot dwell in her generous Breast. In what but the Gifts of Fortune am I not your Inferior? And has not Providence graciously imparted to me a Superfluity of Wealth, that I might do Justice to the Wrongs of injured Virtue? Oh, my Charmer, there can be no Obstacle to my Happiness unless it be dictated by your Heart. To your Heart I address myself. Can it be yielded to me with your Hand; or is there some happier Man to whom you have resigned the one, and for whom you reserve

the other? Fear not, my amiable Girl, to disclose to me the secret Wishes of your Soul. I am your Friend as well as Lover, and I will, in that Character, secure your Happiness, though by the Sacrifice of my dearest Interests. I wish to know your Sentiments before I impart mine to my Aunt, but her Behaviour has evinced her Attachment to you. Ah! let me not linger in Suspence, examine your Heart, and if you find it favourably disposed towards me, remember it is in your Power to confer the highest earthly Happiness on

Your ever faithfully devoted,

RUTLAND.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVI.

FANNY MEADOWS to LORD
RUTLAND.

My LORD,

IF I was not too well acquainted with your Character, to think you capable of trifling with, and insulting an unfortunate Woman, I should have considered your Letter merely as the Result of a sportive Imagination, or unfeeling Heart. But your Lordship's Principles are so well known, that they forbid such a Suspicion. My Surprise, on receiving this noble, this disinterested Proof of your Attachment, was mingled with Regret, for the Pain I must occasion so valuable a Heart. Ah! my Lord, how Passion blinds you. Consider, it is not only the dependent, the poor, the deserted *Fanny Meadows*,

G 2

to

to whom you would ally yourself; it is to the Niece of an unhappy Woman, who has chosen Infamy to avoid Poverty; to the Child (dreadful Thought!) of one who recommended Splendour at the Expence of Virtue. Is this the Family with whom Lord *Rutland* can wish to be connected? And can my noble, my generous Benefactress, support the Thought of being related to such a Family? Undeceive yourself, my Lord; Mrs. *Castleton* loves me, she honours me with her good Opinion. To her I am indebted for the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life. I owe her far more than Life. She has been the Preserver of my Virtue. But she never intended to awaken in me the Presumption of inspiring you with Love. She considers me as her Friend, but she would shudder at the Thoughts of my becoming her Niece.

Never,

Never, my Lord, never shall she have Reason to upbraid my Ingratitude. I feel, I acknowledge your Merit. I wish you the highest Reward of it; but do not imagine it is in my Power to confer it. You owe to yourself, my Lord, to your noble Relations, and to your Posterity, a more suitable Choice. You were born to figure in high Life, and you would wish the Partner of your Heart should be qualified to support the Honours of your Rank.—How should I be exposed to Ridicule, in an exalted Sphere, for Deficiencies, which, in the humble Obscurity where Nature placed me, could never be deemed my Disgrace: I should be depressed by Contempt.—You would have Reason to blush for my Ignorance.—You are of a Family, my Lord, who expect, who claim from you, an Alliance suitable to your

Merit, and your Birth. Genuine Worth may be the natural Growth of every Soil, but the Accomplishments which peculiarly adorn an elevated Station, flourish only by particular Cultivation.—I should be such an Exotic, as you would be ashamed of having transplanted.—Could you acquit yourself to a youthful Family, in giving them a Mother with whom they would have Cause to be dissatisfied? Your noble Father, I have heard from Mrs. *Castleton*, discharged the Debt he owed to his Posterity, in chusing for a Consort a Lady elevated by Birth and Fortune, as well as eminent for Virtue. Connections are necessary to be formed—Dignities must be supported—Equality of Rank ought to be regarded, where Essentials to Happiness are not made the Sacrifice. The Influence of Goodness is more diffusive, when it
beams

beams from the Sphere of Greatness.—Example is prevalent.—Your Lordship is accountable to the World for a Conduct, which would afford a Precedent for the undistinguishing Many to degrade the Nobility by conferring their Titles. Think not that *Fanny Meadows* possesses the Requisites to complete your Happiness. You may find every valuable Qualification that should adorn your Bride, embellished with the Ornaments of Rank and Fortune. Honour me still with your Esteem. Be still my Friend, my Benefactor, but cease the Endeavour, the ineffectual Endeavour to excite in me a presumptuous Wish, which would humiliate to the lowest Degree of Abasement,

Your much obliged,

and truly grateful,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LETTER XVII.

Lord RUTLAND *to* GEORGE
WALLACE, *Esq;*

*W*ALLACE, I am rejected! The
dependent, the poor, the deserted
Fanny Meadows, as she calls herself,
will not condescend to accept a Title
and Honours from the Man who would
sacrifice to her every Advantage the
World thinks desirable. Read the
Letter of the proud Cottager. Are
these the Sentiments of an ignoble
Mind, of a contracted Education?
It cannot be. She deceived us by
feigned Tales of an obscure Birth,
of habitual Poverty. She must have
been accustomed to genteel Life.
Her Sentiments are dignified. Oh!
the sweet Excellence. Will she not
be mine? Is there any one who
has a nearer Interest in her Heart?
There

There is an inexpressible Diffidence in her Manner, whenever I approach her. She does not *look* Indifference, but her Behaviour shews Resolution. She shuns me. Her Eyes are averted when my eager Glances would search into the Recesses of her Soul. I injured her, *Wallace*, in calling her *proud*: She is all Softness, all Humility: How amiable are her Motives of Refusal! They endear her to me more than ever. She mentions the Force of Example; she urges the Duties I owe to my Family, to myself, and to my Posterity. Amiable Pleader! She declares her Inability to support the Station to which I would raise her. Oh! *Wallace*, she deserves an imperial Crown; and yet I will own, that her Connections are not desirable, that the Influence of Example is an Obstacle to such a Choice.

I do

I do acknowledge, that an Inequality of Rank is unlikely to produce an Union of Sentiment, and that every favoured Object may appear to the enamoured Eye, a *Fanny Meadows*. What! shall then the Apprehension of injuring others involve me in the Certainty of an irreparable Loss to myself? Oh! it must not be.

How nobly, yet how tenderly does she mention the Depravity of her Mother! Can I resign her? And because she is destitute of those Advantages which there is no Merit in possessing? No, if my *Fanny's* Heart does not reject me, her Indigence shall not. Her enlarged Mind, though deeply distressed by her Mother's Guilt, and too gratefully affected with a Sense of her own Obligations, has a Tear for every Species of other's Sufferings.
Her

Her Sympathy is not confined to Human Kind, but extends to every created Being. I should not love her as I do, if her Attention was circumscribed by the narrow Sphere of her own private Concerns. But she is a CHRISTIAN, my *Wallace*! She loves her Neighbour as herself; she considers that expressive Word in its most comprehensive Sense. It is not in the Folly of Romance, but in the Language of Reason and Truth, that I call her an Angel. Her Disposition is truly celestial. I must have an Interview with her. Every Argument I can urge, all the Power of Love, shall be exerted to subdue her Resolutions. I know she wishes to make me happy. Will she not allow me to be a Judge of what will render me so? I have no Idea that there is a Possibility of perfect earthly Happiness

Happiness for me without my *Fanny*. To say I cannot *live* without her, would be *hyperbolical*. There are so many Duties in Life to be discharged, independent of the Connubial, that no Disappointments can acquit us from the Performance of them. You find I *am a rational Lover*. *Wallace*, the Love for such a Woman ennobles the Mind, exalts the Conduct! Oh! she is all Perfection. Her Advice, her Example, would animate me to the Practice of every Virtue. I could not greatly fail with such a Partner. Adieu! my Friend. You shall soon receive another Letter, for a Confidant is an essential Relief in my Situation.

I am ever yours,

RUTLAND.

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

FANNY MEADOWS to LUCY MILLES.

MY last acquainted my dear *Lucy* with my Fears and Anxieties. An unexpected Discovery has increased my Danger, and my Alarms. Lord *Rutland* has actually made me an Offer of his Hand, and Heart. I can have no Doubt of the Sincerity of his Attachment. The Inequality of our Stations has occasioned him to make so explicit, so honourable a Proposal as excludes every Suspicion. Neither is the Condition of my own Heart uncertain. Ah! my Dear, I most assuredly love him. It is not merely his Regard for me; it is no particular Act of Generosity, or Benevolence; it is the universal Tenor of his Conduct that has engaged my Affec-

Affection. Perhaps the Knowledge of his Partiality in my Favour has given a softer Turn to my Friendship—But I will not indulge these Sentiments.

I have answered his Letter. I have—*Lucy*, I have absolutely rejected him. Far, far from my Soul be banished Ingratitude. I may be a-while uneasy from the Impossibility of Success in Love, but I can never be unhappy while the Monitor within me does not reproach my Actions. Ah! why was this most amiable of Men born to a Rank and Fortune that forbids my Hopes; or why did it please Providence to place the poor *Fanny Meadows* in a Station so much below the Lord of her Wishes? Rather should I ask, how dare I to find Fault with the Dispensations of Heaven. Oh, am I not the Creature of infinite Wisdom and Goodness? And
does

does it reflect Disgrace on me because my Birth was mean, and my Parents were indigent? But alas! there *is* Dishonour brought upon our Family. Infamy, and Forgetfulness of Virtue, *are* Stains of the deepest Dye. Oh, my unhappy Aunt! My lost Mother!

Lord *Rutland* has urged all the Arguments with which his Love could supply him, to remove every Obstacle; but Reason and Duty tell me, there are many which are unsurmountable. My mean Birth, my Poverty, my Dependence, are Circumstances which, in his Opinion, weigh light, when opposed to Passion. But when to these is added the Conduct of my nearest Relations, would not those despise me as Lady *Rutland*, who pity the unfortunate *Fanny Meadows*? I will not make a Parade of a Refusal which wounds
my

my Heart, though it is approved by Duty. I never, never can be his.—*Lucy*, do not suffer your Partiality for *Grandeur* to induce you to attempt persuading me.—My Resolution is unalterable. I will deserve *Lord Rutland's* Esteem; I have intreated him to withdraw his Heart, and place it on some more worthy Object. Happy! thrice happy! will that Woman be, who may indulge a tender Inclination for this inestimable Man. But no more.—

I wish to have a Letter from you, my Dear. I hope *Sir Thomas* has left the Country. Let me know every Particular that passes. Oh! how many delightful Hours have we spent together. I look back with Regret on those peaceful Times when the Fatigues of our Country Business were lightened by each other's Society and Assistance. When *Mr. Jeffery*
was

was a welcome Attendant of my *Lucy*, and she never indulged a Wish for the Possession of Riches and Titles. I believe you always supposed they could impart Happiness, but you then thought it could subsist without them. Where is now my beloved Miss *Piercy*? What a sweet Privilege was it to visit her so frequently, and to enjoy so unreservedly her improving Conversation. Ah! why did I ever permit Love to intrude into my Breast? Had I not Disquietudes sufficient? But I will take this wandering Heart severely to Task, and bring it under Subjection. My Dear, adieu!

I am yours sincerely,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

L E T T E R XIX.

LUCY MILLES *to* FANNY
MEADOWS.

WELL, my dear *Fanny*, you are a most extraordinary Girl. What! to refuse to be the Wife of a Nobleman, and of such a Man as you tell me Lord *Rutland* is; and yet you are in Love, you say. It can't be, *Fanny*. 'Tis not in Nature. Have not you been ill lately, and a Fever settled upon your Brain? Or, has not this Offer turned your Head a little? Upon my Word, if I do not guess right in one of these Respects, you are absolutely unaccountable. Are you the worse for your Mother's and your Aunt's Faults? And is not Lord *Rutland* rich enough to make up for your Poverty? I'll tell you what, my Dear; Miss *Piercy's* Conversation

versation has done you no Good, if it has only taught you to give up your own Happiness. I don't like such high-strained Notions—I am sure I should not do as you have done; yet you may be in the right for all that.—My Father and Mother doat upon you for your Behaviour, and, to say the Truth, *Fanny*, I am more than half angry with you for being so marvelously scrupulous.—I hear of nothing but you; I am told, truly, that I ought to marry this hateful *Jeffery*, and that you would do so.—So you might if you would. I heartily wish somebody was married to him, for here I am confined to the House, for fear I should meet the sweet Sir *Thomas*, who is always upon the Watch for me; and the troublesome, impertinent Creature is constantly at my Elbow. Such Nonsense too, puffed in a Whiff of Tobacco,

as is enough to suffocate one, while Sir *Thomas* breathes nothing but *Perfumes* and *Adoration*.—Well! 'tis amazing how any Body can overlook such *Charms* as Sir *Thomas's*; and he dresses so sweetly—and has such a grand Chariot—And then to hear my Mother cry up *Jeffery's* Industry, and my Father talk of *Jeffery's* Honesty—So sober, says one, so modest, says the other. A mighty thing, indeed, to be *industrious* and *honest*.—The Fellow can work hard, and won't steal any thing—in plain English.—There is something so monstrous vulgar in People's working for their Bread.—Then *modest* and *sober* too—Dear me, 'tis nothing to the purpose—I won't be his Wife, *Fanny*, I am resolved upon it—No such low doings.—Why will not my Father and Mother hear what Sir *Thomas* has to say? Such a great Man must make grand Offers.

Offers. Lud! my Heart beats quick at the very Thoughts of what a fine Lady I may be if they don't stand in their own Light.—As true as I am alive, *Fanny*, there's Sir *Thomas* riding past.—What a fine prancing Horse, and what rich Liveries are his Servants drest in!—*Jeffery*! why he is not worthy to wipe their Shoes.—Good Night, my dear Girl. I can say no more.

LUCY MILLES.

L E T T E R XX.

FANNY MEADOWS to LUCY
MILLES.

I Tremble for you, my *Lucy*— You are on the Brink of a Precipice— Your Plan of Life would effectually destroy your expected Happiness. Ah! my Dear, is it for rural Simplicity to propose Enjoyments amidst the polite World? Let not the Love of Novelty, the Vanity of Dress and Parade, draw your Mind from the calm Delights of a Country Life. Mr. *Jeffery* is only disagreeable because Sir *Thomas's* Fortune and Equipage appear to be desirable. Is it not so, my Dear? Examine your own Heart—Lay aside Title, Estate, and its Appurtenances, and tell me frankly, whether Mr. *Jeffery* does not possess the Requisites for the Husband of an humble, lowly Maiden? You know

know nothing of the World you wish to engage in, yet you imagine Pleasures, of which you cannot judge, and forgive me if I add, in which you could not share. I write this in Agitation of Mind on your Account. Do, my dear Girl, obey and oblige your Parents, and do not permit Sir *Thomas* to believe that his fluttering Attentions can make you forgetful of what you owe to your Friends, and to your real Lover. In how light a Manner you mention the good Qualities of Mr. *Jeffery*! This is not natural to my *Lucy*: You used to value him for his *Sobriety* and *Honesty*, and you thought you could be satisfied with the Maintenance his *Industry* could procure. Ah! my Friend, trust me, he has Recommendations much more valuable than mere Tinsel and Title. "An honest Man's the noblest Work of God," says one of

our greatest Poets; you know the Character of the one, you are entirely ignorant of that of the other.

As for Lord *Rutland*, he must not, he cannot be mine. I will punish my own Heart for daring to admit so dangerous a Guest.—I will banish his Image from it; he will be my Friend—Never, never shall he degrade himself by uniting his Destiny with that of

Your unhappy,

but ever affectionate,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

L E T.

LETTER XXI.

LUCY MILLES to FANNY
MEADOWS.

OH! *Fanny*, I am almost wild with Joy—You have written me a deal of Advice, and I thank you, but 'twas all out of Season. I'm to be married to-morrow. But no Mr. *Jeffery*, I can tell you. Let him seek out a properer Help-mate. I am not for him. My Father and Mother kept me up so close, and were so determined I should marry their Favourite, that Sir *Thomas* was quite in a despairing Way, and resolved he would have me. He goes to my Father, promises to make me his Wife, and that he would meet me, whenever my Parents pleased, at Church. They liked *Jeffery* as a Husband for me, better than that I should

should be Mistress to Sir *Thomas*; but when he offered to marry me, the Struggle was at an end, and Mrs. *Jeffery* was not so pleasing a Sound as Lady *Gresham*. Preparations have been making; I am to be as fine and as great as I can wish. Honest *Jeffery* raves and storms, but Threats can do no Hurt, and he does not wear a Sword. — Sir *Thomas* has Nobody's Consent to ask, and I think, for my part, he is old enough to chuse a Wife for himself. — My Father and Mother are to live in a Farm of his, the other Side of *London*. We shall leave this Place as soon as we are married, but as he talks of rambling about for some Weeks, do not write till you hear again from me. I am to have the sweetest Chariot that Eyes ever beheld, and such a fine Gentleman for my Footman, that I declare I shall be afraid to employ him. *Jeffery* is
a mere

a mere Groom to him. My Negligees are rich enough to weigh me down, and my Jewels do sparkle so delightfully, that they make my Eyes ake to look at them. Well, I am certain I must be vastly happy, for what can I want? Not Happiness, I'm sure, my Dear, for what can I possibly have to wish for? My Father and Mother too, dear good Souls, to see them drest so well, and look so happy, 'tis a great Comfort to me: The worst of it is, we must part. I have cried heartily about that, but we shall often meet: You must come and stay with me, live with me, if you please; though, on second Thoughts, you are so handsome, I should be half afraid of losing Sir *Thomas's* Heart. But, seriously, I shall rejoice to see you, and I shall want *you* to see *me*. Fine Fathers, they say, make fine Birds. I assure you I look vastly well in my
new

new Apparel. You will scarce find out any Likeness to your old Friend *Lucy Milles* in Lady *Gresham*. Good Night, my Dear. Think again and again on your noble Offer, and say No, if you can. I wish you happy, as happy as will be, I doubt not,

Your sincere Friend,

LUCY MILLES.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXII.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE WALLACE, *Esq;*

WALLACE, I love her more than ever, and yet I must resign her. Her Principles have combated her Inclination, and been victorious : She is steady in her Refusal, yet owns a Tendernefs for me which she never felt for any other. Disappointed for feveral Days in the Attempts I made to fpeak to her, I congratulated myfelf laft Night on my good Fortune, when I faw my amiable *Fanny* fitting alone in a retired Part of the Garden. She was reading fo attentively, that ſhe did not hear me approach her, nor lifted her Eyes till I accoſted her. She then ſtarted, a crimſon Bluſh overſpread her Cheek, and her expreſſive

pressive Looks inspired me with the Shadow of a Hope, that this sweet Confusion was favourable to my Love. My Heart anxiously fluttered. I felt an Awe that constrained me to be silent, whilst the Difficulties that had hitherto prevented an Interview, urged me to speak.

You, who never experienced, who, therefore, can have no Idea of this timid Distress, will laugh at my Embarrassment; you know not my *Fanny*: You consider her only as a beautiful, virtuous, and obscure Girl, and are a Stranger to those thousand nameless Delicacies, that Superiority of Soul, and Dignity of Conduct, which elevate above Nobility, and which distinguish her from all the Women I ever before observed. How insignificant appeared all the Advantages of Rank and Fortune when put in Competition with the intrinsic Excellence

cellence of this admirable Woman! The Fears of unseasonable Interruptions at length conquered all other, and, gently taking her Hand, which trembled in mine, "Believe me, said I, my amiable *Fanny*, if I loved you less, I should not be at a Loss for Words to disclose my Passion. If the Language of my Heart be not intelligible by my Eyes, how shall I convey it to you? My Letter faintly expressed the Sentiments I feel. Tell me, sweet Excellence, are there no Hopes for the Man whose Love is as pure as the Object who inspires it?"—*Fanny* listened to me with visible Emotion. Her Eyes were modestly fixed on the Ground. When I ceased speaking, she sat silent a few Moments, then withdrawing her Hand, "My Lord, (answered she, in a tremulous Tone) I am very sensible of the Honour you do me, by your
good

good Opinion, but I was in Hopes you would have acquiesced in my Motives of Refusal. You must not disgrace yourself and Family, by an Alliance with a mean Girl, whose Obscurity is far from being the only Obstacle to your present Wishes.”—She paused a Moment—then added, “Think of me no more, my Lord, or think of me as one who desires only to secure your Esteem, and who is determined, absolutely determined, never to forfeit her Right to it by a Conduct which would justly lessen her in her own Eyes.”—“What then, (returned I,) it is impossible for you to love me?” She hesitated, she blushed. “Your Lordship mistakes me, (said she;) Love has nothing to do with my Resolutions: I will not be insincere—I am not insensible—my Objections do not arise from my Heart, but from my Reason, from my Duty.—

Duty.—I know no Person so amiable as your Lordship — I never felt a tender Preference for any one — but — for — You. — The last Words were scarcely intelligible: my Joy was inexpressible. “Oh, my Charmer, cried I, eagerly throwing my Arms round her Waist, and clasping her to my Bosom, is it possible that your devoted *Rutland* is dear to you. Extatic Declaration!” — “My Lord, answered the lovely *Fanny*, interrupting me, and disengaging herself from my encircling Arms, I have acknowledged my Sensibility of your Merit, not only as a Proof of my Sincerity, but to convince you, that my Resolution is unalterable. I do love you, my Lord, but it is with a Passion that enables me to distinguish the real Interest of him I love. I assure you, my Lord, the Hope of being yours never once entered into my Breast. I know too

well the insurmountable Bars that divide us, to contemplate in Idea so visionary a Prospect.”—“ And can you talk of loving me? replied I: No, *Fanny*, you do not intend to impose on me; but you deceive yourself. It is you alone who raise those Obstacles, which appear to you to be insurmountable. Most amiable of Women, if your Heart is not really insensible to my Love, you must, you shall be mine.”

I spoke these Words in an elevated and fervent Manner: Indeed I was so intent on the Subject of our Conversation, and so desirous of obtaining a more favourable Sentence, that I forgot I had any Reason to apprehend Surprise, and my Aunt was seated by us before we perceived her. My Confusion at her unexpected Appearance, was not a little increased by the Gravity of her Address.—“ I had not suspected,

pected, Nephew, the Cause of your long Continuance at N—. I had imputed it chiefly to your Regard for me; yet I was sufficiently sensible, that my young Companion's Society must be an additional Gratification. The Confidence of each might have been expected from the Relation I bear to One, and my unfeigned Friendship for Both. But I will not upbraid you. Only tell me, my Lord, what it is you propose to do."

I was too much affected by this calm Remonstrance to answer immediately; but my Love for *Fanny*, and Desire of gaining my Aunt for an Advocate, surmounted every Consideration that had occasioned my Silence.

—"I am too well convinced of Miss *Meadows's* Perfections, and of your just Opinion of her, Madam, said I, to make any Apology for my Attach-

ment. It would indeed be offering an Injury to her Merit, and an Affront to your Discernment. An Heart unguarded by any prior Engagement, could not long remain indifferent to her Excellence. You have often, in the Warmth of Friendship, acknowledged her to be the most amiable of Women. Does her mean Birth, or Misfortunes lessen her real Value ?"—
“ My Lord, said the charming *Fanny*, interrupting me, we have been both to blame ; but I am particularly so ; yet let me urge in my own Defence, that I was in Hopes my unalterable Resolution would have prevented your further Sollicitations, and that I needed not have given Mrs. *Castleton* the Pain of knowing you had ever condescended to think of so unworthy an Alliance. Pardon me, dearest Madam, the Uneasiness I have caused you, and permit me to retire far from
you,

you, and from this Place. On my Knees I most solemnly assure you, that Lord *Rutland* shall never, by a Marriage with me, ally himself to Poverty and Infamy." — "What then, *Fanny*, cried I, will you render me miserable, by refusing me your Hand, because there are unworthy Persons in your Family? Must your Superiority in Merit be despised, because you do not possess an Equality of Rank and Fortune? Base and sordid Maxims! My Reason, my Heart, my Religion, all disavow them." — "My Lord, answered *Fanny*, your present Prepossession in my Favour, makes you overlook the Disadvantages which would be obvious to all the World but a Lover, and which to me are insuperable Obstacles." — "Exalted Girl! cried my Aunt; your Sentiments raise you indeed above the highest Rank; and yet, circumstanced as you

are, I admire your Steadiness. I do not wonder at my Nephew's Attachment, but I applaud your Refusal. You have not offended me, my *Fanny*. I am convinced you have given me the true Reason of your Silence." — "Now you make me happy, replied *Fanny*," kissing the Hand of her Benefactress. My Aunt extended the other to me : "My Dear, said she, I must support this generous Creature in her present Sentiments. Think of the Affair more deliberately, and you must acquiesce in her Determinations." She then took *Fanny* by the Arm, and telling me she would pay a Visit to some of her poor Neighbours, they both left me.

And now, *Wallace*, what is the Result ? Must I give her up ? Tamely resign her ? She loves, me, too ; — she owns she loves me. — Ah ! how weak is Passion in such a Soul as her's.

her's. Every Action flows from Judgment, from Principle. She has repeatedly told me, she has promised my Aunt she never will be mine. But I must, I will try once more my Fate. My Aunt shall be a Witness of our Conversation. She shall know how much my Happiness depends on a favourable Sentence.

Adieu! till this Interview be over.

Ever yours,

RUTLAND.

L E T T E R XXIII.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE WALLACE, Esq;

O H! my Friend, I am more attached to her than ever, and yet I am constrained to resign her. She never will be mine. My Reason assents to her Motives, but my Heart rebels.—On their Return from their Walk I met the Ladies in the Parlour, and, approaching my Aunt, “A thousand Thanks, dearest Madam, (said I, taking her Hand,) for your Forgiveness of my Silence; but you must do more; you must be my Friend, my Advocate with this amiable Girl. She must not be inexorable: My Happiness in this World depends on her Approbation. “Permit me, my Lord, (replied the lovely *Fanny*,) permit me once more to answer for myself. I have owned a
Pre-

Preference for you, but, be assured,
 that the Regard I feel is unfavourable
 to your Wishes. I never will lessen
 myself in your Esteem, nor you in
 the Opinion of the World. I am not
 then inexorable, but be assured I am
 unalterable. You think me worthy
 of your Affection; but allowing that
 I were really what your Partiality re-
 presents me, do you suppose that a
 Cottage only can produce those valu-
 able Qualifications you wish to find
 in the Wife of your Choice? Unde-
 ceive yourself, my Lord. There are
 many Ladies, of your own exalted
 Rank, who will confer Honour by
 real Dignity of Soul; who, whilst they
 possess all that native Purity, and Sim-
 plicity of Mind, which are best nou-
 rished in Retirement, add to these the
 Graces and true Politeness which adorn
 a public Station. Solicit no more,
 my excellent Benefactress. I know
 she

she loves me — I will deserve her Regard. Receive this as my final Determination : I never will be ungrateful to my Friends, nor forgetful of myself.”

She arose as she finished speaking, and withdrew immediately. I sat some Time motionless and silent ; my Aunt, touched with my Situation, drew her Chair near me, and, with a Look of tender Sympathy — “ I pity you, my dear *Henry*, (said she,) I pity you from my Soul ; your Heart, new to Love, has no Idea of Happiness with any other than the present beloved Object. But *Fanny* is certainly in the Right. I acknowledge all her Perfections ; but why will you suppose that she is unequalled ? Merit may surely be found amongst every Class of Beings ; in general, a mean Birth prevents the Cultivation of mental Excellence. *Fanny* is an Exception ;

tion ; she has had Advantages which she has uncommonly improved ; but, as she has truly observed, there are Circumstances which would render her an unfit Wife for a Person of your Rank, and which, in the Light she generously and truly places them, would be Diffusives to all but an irrational Lover. Excuse me, Nephew ; when *you* calmly consult your Reason, rather than your Heart, you will, I think, be of my Opinion." I could make no Answer. I only grasped her Hand, then retired to my own Apartment.

I have revolved, as coolly and dispassionately as possible, every Circumstance, and I must—I find I must—relinquish her. Oh, my Friends ! Why did I suffer Love to intrude into my Breast ? How free from Anxiety was every Thought before ! *Wallace !* I cannot be happy without her ; Misery must

must be my Choice; my Portion! Nothing but Considerations of Duty can alleviate my Distress. I do not indulge Despair, and talk of Death, but I can truly say that this Disappointment has cast a Gloom over all my Prospects in Life. Time, my Aunt tells me, will do much. Religion, surely, can do more. The Influence of Both may, perhaps, restore my Peace, but at present my whole Soul is oppressed with Grief. My Aunt and *Fanny* join their Intreaties that I would leave *N—*. I know not how to tear myself from this beloved Spot, but it must be so. I can never conquer my Passion, whilst I see this charming Creature every Day. You will soon have me in Town. Adieu! *Wallace*, I am

Yours ever,

RUTLAND.

LETTER XXIV.

*Lady GRESHAM to FANNY
MEADOWS.*

THIS Letter will be quite an unexpected Pleasure to my dear *Fanny*, for I gave her Reason to think of a long Silence. But as I find we shall stay some Time longer in Town, and I don't express myself as the fine People talk here, I want somebody whom I can be free enough with, to tell all I think of this new World. I wish much too to hear how you go on with your agreeable Nobleman : I hope you will consent to marry him, and come amongst us, for I want you more than I thought I should. My Father and Mother are gone down to their new Dwelling, for they did not like the Hurry and Bustle of *London*.

We

We left **** immediately after the Knot was tied, and, after a delightful Journey, arrived at this *very grand House*. I found myself sadly at a Loss to return the Compliments I received from Sir *Thomas's* Friends and Acquaintance; but I seemed to be very much admired; and you may be sure I find enough to admire. Every thing I hear and see is Matter of Wonder. Lord bless me! it is an amazing Place. I have been at Plays, Operas, *Ranelagh*, and I know not where, but I can't help thinking there is a Something wanting in me; I never open my Lips, but People seem disposed to laugh. The Men are more civil than the Women; they praise me to the Skies; but they all join in lamenting my Ignorance of the fashionable Games at Cards. I must learn to play, Sir *Thomas* tells me. Now I abominate the very Thoughts
of

of it. 'Tis such a horrid Confinement to sit starch'd up at a Card-Table. To be sure, my Dear, Miss *Piercy* must be very different from the great Ladies here, for I never heard you complain of being distressed in her Company, by not knowing how to behave; but I have been often put to the Blush by being stared at with Looks of Wonder. And then indeed you are more polished than I. — I can't, for my Life, get into the easy Manner of coming into a Room, and making the fashionable Curt'sy, and yet I have tried again and again before the Glass by the Hour together. Then, dear Heart! *Fanny*, I am at such a Loss what to talk of: The Ladies here will prattle away with the greatest Ease upon Cards, Dress, Politics, Plays, Preachers, Masquerades, and I don't know what. Nay, they can talk upon Nothing. They seem to have

have so much to say, that they talk as fast as possible for fear of being interrupted, so that it is less necessary, indeed, for me to say much; but I wish to be able to put in a Word or two now and then. You know I have read but little: Good Books were too grave for me, and yet you have often praised me for being well disposed and good natured. The Books that Miss *Piercy* lent you would have taken up my Thoughts too much, and I never was a Friend to much Thinking: Novels I have read a few, but then they were written some time ago, and are out of Date with my present Acquaintance, who like nothing but what is perfectly new. As to what are called Good Books, indeed, I don't think the Ladies know much more than I do. They talk of fine Sermons and charming Preachers, but I don't believe

lieve they remember enough to be the better for them. Plays they are better acquainted with, and I often hear them repeat Speeches that I believe are very fine. But Dress and Cards are the chief things spoken of. There are so many different Fashions, and such a Variety of Ways of Playing the Game, that I fancy they could talk them over till Dooms-day. I wish I knew a little more of the Matter ; but I am quite at a Loss. — Here I am dressed up, like a jointed Doll ; tho' indeed this makes me something of the fine Lady, for they hate Trouble ; and to be sure there is some in lifting one's Arms to one's Head. As to Cards, I have sat by, and looked over, but I get up again just as wise as I sat down. It would be a greater fatigue to me to play for an Hour, than to make Cheese and Butter by the whole Day together.

But I must pay some Tax for my fine Cloaths and my Coach, and I *do* enjoy *them*. As I said before, I want you sadly, for here I know Nobody I can trust; for my Aukwardness and Ignorance only make me laughed at. Even my own Woman smiles frequently, with a kind of Sneer, at my Manner of saying and doing things. I was vastly happy for the first Fortnight or three Weeks after I married; for what with travelling, seeing fine Places, and being called *my Lady*, my little Brain was almost turned. I begin to be more composed now; but I wish I was more like you. I dare say you would be at no Loss here in my Place. Miss *Piercy's* Acquaintance was a vast Help to you; I wish she had taken as great a Fancy to me too; but tho' I must say she was always very civil, and I have heard you say she thought me
a good

a good sort of Girl, she never invited me to her House, you know, as she did you. Well, I shall improve in Time. 'Tis never too late to mend.

Good Night, my dear *Fanny*. 'Tis past Twelve, and my Eyes can scarcely keep open any longer than to tell you that I am

Yours very sincerely,

LUCY GRESHAM.

L E T T E R XXV.

FANNY MEADOWS to *Lady*
GRESHAM.

YOUR Letter, my Dear, was indeed unexpected, and the Pleasure very great which I experienced on the Receipt of it. I most truly and fervently congratulate you on your Marriage. I rejoice most particularly that your Advancement has not inspired you with Pride, and I pity your Embarrassments. The gay World, my Dear, the fashionable Circle, are not our accustomed Places of Action.

For my own Part, my *Lucy*, (pardon the Freedom of Friendship,) I have absolutely rejected the splendid Fortune and elevated Rank which were offered to my Acceptance. Alas! the Rank and Fortune were trifling

fling Advantages in my Opinion ; but the Man, the amiable, the excellent Man, who invited me to share them with him, is too amiable, too excellent to be rejected with Indifference. I own that my Heart suffers in the Triumph of my Duty ; but let it suffer : I will not listen to its Dictates. Mrs. *Castleton* approves my Conduct. As to Lord *Rutland*, tho' I believe his Love condemns me, yet I am certain his Reason applauds me, and his Esteem is increased. May he be happy ! — happy as he deserves to be — with some more worthy Woman. He has promised he will urge me no further on this Subject ; but could I describe his Air, his Manner, the melancholy and Distress displayed on his expressive Countenance, you would think I have made some Sacrifice. — To-morrow he leaves us ; it ought to be—it must be so ! Nothing but Ab-

fence can perhaps effect a perfect Cure. Mrs. *Castleton* is kinder to me than ever. She pities me for the Uneasiness which I cannot conceal from her piercing Observation, and yet she enjoys my Determination. It is natural she should rejoice in it. I already owe too many Obligations to this noble Family. — Snatched from — Ah! my unhappy Mother, what is become of her? What a Situation is her's! Shall I then lament my own Fate in the Loss of a Man who was not born for me? No, I will silence every repining Thought. How miserable is she who must condemn herself! What Pangs does Innocence escape! May I ever preserve that Bosom Friend!

* * * * *

He is gone, my Dear, Lord *Rutland* is gone. I will not attempt to describe our parting. — It was too tender on his Side. I was more of a Heroine than

than I thought I should have been. My Resolution is laudable, and I was endued with Fortitude to support it. But the Emotions of the Heart cannot be wholly subdued. No sooner was my Lord gone, than the Tears flowed down my Cheeks. I endeavoured to conceal them; Mrs. *Castleton* observed my Struggles, and, embracing me with the utmost Tenderness, "Do not be ashamed, my Dear, (said she) to weep. There would be little Merit in your Refusal, if you regarded my Nephew with Indifference. Retire, my sweet Girl, if it is your Wish to be alone. Let me be no Restraint upon you." I kissed her Hand, and gladly took the Advantage of her Permission to retire immediately.

I thank Heaven, Reflection strengthens my Resolution. May I ever remain the humble *Fanny Meadows*, and enjoy Self Approbation, rather than

K 4 become

become the Honourable Lady *Rutland*, and lose the Congratulations of my own Heart. Will *You*, my Dear, congratulate me on this Occasion? Do not be dazzled with the Splendour of the Offer I have refused. You find that Titles, when they grow familiar, cease to give the Pleasure you expected from them. May your Happiness exceed even your highest Hopes, but be assured you will not receive it from Pomp and Grandeur. You wish for me, dear Lady *Gresham*; you think I should be more equal to the fashionable *Duties* of your Station. In some Degree they may be called so, but I am as inexperienced as yourself: My dear Miss *Piercy*, though she was versed in all the Politeness that excludes Insincerity, always treated me with that endearing Familiarity so necessary to Friendship. Satisfied with enlarging my Understanding, and improving

proving my Heart, she taught me no Lessons but what she thought would increase my Happiness, in the humble Situation in which Providence had placed me. A Situation most suited to my Turn of Mind; I enjoyed it, for I feared not the Evils to which I have been since exposed. But how insensibly Self has run away with my Pen! Can you not, my Dear, chuse out some friendly Instructress, who will be superior to the idle Folly of laughing at a Person's Ignorance of those Customs, which she has had no Opportunity of observing? Do not, however, suffer yourself to be persuaded to follow any Fashion which Duty condemns. Better, far better had you remained the humble Cottager, than to exchange a guileless Heart for a mere external Polish. Cherish that Frankness, that Sincerity of Heart, which has hitherto distinguished you.—
That

That Humility of Spirit, which will exalt you to a higher Title than the most dignified earthly Station.—Do not be uneasy that you can't at present acquit yourself with that Ease in Company which you observe in others.—Has Sir *Thomas* no Relations who could instruct you? Surely, if he has, it would have been better to have introduced you to them first, than to have distressed you, by bringing you into the Midst of a gay World. Intreat him to chuse some proper Person to inform you what you want to know. This will convince him of your Desire to oblige him, and he will contrive Means for the Improvement of your Politeness.

As for me, my *Lucy*, I have begged of Mrs. *Castleton* to place me in a distant Retreat, with some elderly Lady, who has no dangerous Connections, (indeed my Fears do not arise from
Vanity,

Vanity, but Experience,) with whom I should joyfully accept the Office of Servant.—My generous Benefactress will not hear me talk of Service. She shall recommend me, she says, as a *Companion* to a Widow Lady, who lives in *Dorsetshire*, who, she kindly adds, will thank her for the most valuable Present she ever received. She has written this Morning, therefore I have taken a last Farewell of Lord *Rutland*. It is for the best.—I ought not to see him any more. I shall soon, I doubt not, be perfectly easy on his Account. Pray for me, that Providence may support me in all Distresses. You shall have another Letter when my Departure is settled, and I will send you a Direction. In all Situations believe me to be

Your sincerely affectionate,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXVI.

FANNY MEADOWS *to Lady*
GRESHAM.

IN the Fulness of my Heart I now take up my Pen. *Lucy*, I shudder for you. What a World have you entered! Virtue is laughed at, despised! The Spirit of Dissipation actuates the Movements of Life. People would be offended at being termed irrational, yet their Pleasures are merely animal. But am I not too severe? Are not my Reflections too general? I am offended — shocked! — Why are Lord *Rutland* and my excellent Protectress dishonoured by a Relation so little allied to their Virtues! But I will give you the frightful Particulars of the Affront offered to the Sex indeed, tho' particularly addressed to me.

Sir

Sir *Milward Jackson* is the Son of Mrs. *Castleton's* Sister. He lost both his Parents before he came of Age. They left him a very affluent Fortune, with an immediate and entire Command of it. He has run through every Excess, that the Names of Pleasure and Fashion could recommend; and at the Age of Thirty-five has all the Infirmities of Seventy. Mrs. *Castleton* has his Company once a Year for one Night, and I believe the only Pleasure she feels on the Occasion is, that his Stay is so very short. I wish the Visit had been delayed for a Week or two longer, and I should, perhaps, have escaped the Mortification he caused me. I was with Mrs. *Castleton* when he arrived, and she did not desire my Absence. Indeed, as he had just recovered from a dangerous Illness, which, he said, had greatly lowered his Spirits, and he had mentioned

tioned me in a Letter, to give Notice of his Approach, she did not fear any Affront intended to me, and could not dispense with my Attendance. I received him with the Respect I thought due to so near a Relation of my Benefactress. He glanced his Eye over me from Head to Foot, and, turning to Mrs. *Castleton*, “ Miss *Meadows*, I presume, Madam ! a fine Girl, upon my Honour ! very handsome, indeed — a perfect *Venus* ! ”

Forgive, my Dear, the seeming Vanity ; I only repeat this Rant, to give you an Idea of his Character. He exalted this worthless Person, whilst he entertained the most despicable Opinion of my Mind. Judge if his Praises did not teach me Humility. I was abashed by the Flattery he chose to bestow upon me ; but Mrs. *Castleton* relieved me, and the Conversation
taking

taking a different Turn, I listened, in Hopes of hearing something that might excite in me less unfavourable Thoughts of him. But how different, how shockingly unlike is this Man to Lord *Rutland*. His Cousin ! It cannot surely be. The lightest, most dissipated Discourse seemed familiar to him ; and when Mrs. *Castleton*, with her usual Goodness of Heart, sought to render improving Subjects engaging, his Yawns and Inattention shewed how incapable he was of relishing any rational Enjoyments. I was disgusted, and determined to leave the Room, when Mrs. *Castleton* was called out to speak with some Person on Business. It would have been disrespectful, and looked too particular, to have retired immediately ; I therefore kept my Seat, though perhaps with some Appearance of Dissatisfaction. As his Life has been wholly
 spent

spent (*spent, wasted* indeed,) in the fashionable World, I was at a Loss on what Subject to support a Conversation, and I dreaded Silence, lest he should interrupt it by some disagreeable Observation. I was not too apprehensive.—Mrs. *Castleton* had scarcely left the Room, when he approached me, and, with a Smile of Contempt, “How that old Woman chaunts out her musty Proverbs! said he, she forgets that

Youth’s the Season made for Joy,
Love is then our Duty.

But you have had one to remind you of it, my Sweet One, ha? Lord *Rutland*, I hear, besieges you closely — He is a fine young Fellow, and I don’t wonder that you love him. But how do you manage to keep your Amour secret from the old Lady? Egad! you must be good Contrivers; but I always said, when I have heard of
Harry’s

Harry's Sobriety, and Regularity, that he was a sly Dog. This Affair proves it; for this old Piece of Mortality would have discovered your Intimacy, if it were not well conducted."

The Cruelty of the Supposition, the Injury offered to Lord *Rutland*, in concluding him to be so abandoned a Seducer, and the little Hope of convincing such a Man as this, of the Injustice he was guilty of, wounded my very Soul. To remain silent was to acknowledge him to have judged truly of our Situation. I forced myself, therefore, to return him this Answer: "How cruel, Sir *Milward*, is it to imagine, that Poverty and Innocence cannot subsist together, or that Riches and Grandeur are always Snares to the Possessor! I do most solemnly assure you, that Lord *Rutland* never harboured a Thought to my Dishonour; and I hope I can as truly say, that Virtue, supported by the Assist-

ance of Heaven, could have resisted every Argument of Vice, whoever was its Advocate."—"My pretty Preacher, answered he, ironically, it is not the Force of Argument so much as the Eloquence of the Passions that triumphs over Virtue. But why this Defence? Do you fear my Censures?—Undeceive yourself, my Child—I honour the generous Girl, who is guided by Nature's Dictates. But why did Lord *Rutland* bring you under the Roof of this scrupulous antiquated Prude? Could he not have chosen some private Retreat?"

Oh! *Lucy*, how severe a Suffering is Poverty, when it subjects us to Insults such as these! I could not restrain my Tears. "Good God, said I, is it possible that Lord *Rutland* can be suspected of Villainy! Excuse me, Sir *Milward*, you are no Judge of the Sentiments of a benevolent Heart. His Principles would not permit him

to injure any one. For me, Sir, I am a Stranger to you. You might suppose, that, to a Person oppressed with the Weight of Distresses and Obligations, the Glitter of Splendour and Affluence must be irresistible. Professions of my Virtue will be disbelieved where Lord *Rutland's* Honour is suspected. My Heart acquits me, and Mrs. *Castleton* can do Justice to my Assertions of Innocence.—But think of me as you please—I submit.”

Here Mrs. *Castleton* entered; she observed my Tears and Discomposure, and, in the tenderest Manner, enquired the Cause. My Heart was full—my Eyes overflowed.—“ Oh! Madam, cried I, Sir *Milward* believes me to be a Wretch unworthy of your Favour, or indeed of any thing but Contempt. Will you defend the injured *Fanny Meadows*?” I could add no more, but, with my Handkerchief at my Eyes, indulged my Affliction. Sir

Milward was surprized at the Effect his Observations had produced; "Upon my Soul, cried he, this is very strange. What does the Girl mean? Is it a Disgrace to one in her Situation to be Mistress to a young Nobleman? He does her Honour, and if it be your Pleasure to have her live with you, certainly you are very kind."—"For shame, Sir *Milward*! answered my Benefactress, warmly, how dare you insinuate Suspicions so injurious to Lord *Rutland*, to this amiable Girl, and to myself. Know, Sir, they are superior to your Attacks.—They can distinguish between the false Opinions of the World, and the Conduct which involves in real Disgrace.—Amongst what despicable Beings do you place me, when you imagine I can connive at such an Intimacy as you hint at! I could not have believed"—Sir *Milward* interrupted her: "My dear good Lady, cried he, what a Pother

is here about nothing; I had heard that the Case was much worse. Marriage was talked of, but I thought Lord *Rutland* knew too much of the World not to prefer the Life of Honour. Who is there that censures a Person for those soft Attachments? and a Man of his Rank and Fortune.— It would be ridiculous! I can't say I imagined you would chuse to have his Miss your Companion, but I did not know whether you might not have consented to guard her from the Wasps and Flies that flutter around Beauty, till he had provided her some Place of Residence. And you, my little Sensitive Plant, did I too rudely touch upon the Subject of Love? You must expect to be jested with, Child, and surely you may well support it, when you have gained such a Heart. As to the Names of Wife and Husband

“ They only mean Ill-nature, Cares,
and Quarrels,”

L 3

Yours

Yours is the Life for Constancy in Love.”—

I could not bear, unanswered, these insulting Airs. “I hear you, Sir, said I, with Amazement and Horror. But what else can be expected from the Despiser of Human Tyes, and the Transgressor of Divine? Virtue is too much injured to attempt any further Justification.” I then hastily left the Room, nor could I prevail upon myself to enter it again while he staid; Mrs. *Castleton*, far from desiring me to do so, shewed such apparent Disapprobation of his Sentiments and Manner, that he took Leave the next Morning.— Poor Wretch! how I pity him and all of his Mode of Thinking. I am preparing for my Departure. Mrs. *Martyn*, to whom my Benefactress wrote, has sent such a Letter, as assures me of the kindest Reception. I shall be “her Companion, her Friend, she says; she expects me with Impatience.”

And

And now, my *Lucy*, what is there to disquiet me but my unhappy Mother, and my own wayward Heart? for, oh! my Dear, my Heart does suffer, but my Duty rejoices. I would not again see Lord *Rutland*. I will ever avoid him till I have entirely conquered my rebellious Inclinations. The Time, I hope, will come, when we may meet with Safety: But what further Inter-course shall I have with this amiable Family? My future Lot is hidden in Uncertainty. But I will endeavour to acquit myself so as to enjoy Self-Approbation, and leave to Heaven the Disposal of my temporal State, with the Resignation and Trust that becomes a *Christian*.

Adieu! my Dear. You shall soon be informed of my Change of Situation, and every Circumstance that relates to

Your sincerely affectionate,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

L E T T E R XXVII.

GEORGE WALLACE, *Esq;* to FANNY
MEADOWS.

YOU will be surprized, most amiable of your Sex, to receive a Letter from a Person entirely unknown to you; but, as the Friend of Lord *Rutland*, I am deeply interested in every thing that regards the amiable Miss *Meadows*. My Friend has informed me of his Love, your Refusal, your exalted Motives, and your noble Resolution. He has also, as far as Words can express the Language of the Heart, described the Melancholy, the Despair he feels. Oh! Miss *Meadows*, can you destroy the Happiness of the Man who adores you? Can you value the Opinion of the World more than his Peace? You owned a tender Attachment; Ah! how little do you know of Love, if you are capable of
Per-

Perseverance in such Cruelty! Yes, I repeat, *Cruelty*. You are formed for each other. Do not attempt to counteract the Designs of Heaven. In the Eye of Providence, Engagements, cemented by the Heart, are more sacred and indissoluble than the Vows uttered before the Priest. — The Heart only need to be consulted in such Connections; and when the Parties no longer feel the tender Passion, the Tye is broken. What have Laws to do with Love?

“ Love, free as Air, at Sight of Human
Ties,
Spreads his light Wings, and in a Moment flies.”

You think Lord *Rutland* would be degraded by a Marriage with you. I own I am of a different Opinion. Your Merit would confer Honour on his Choice, and his Rank do Justice to your Merit. But you regard the
Opinion

Opinion of the World, and sacrifice your Inclinations to conciliate its Favour. Be it so. That World has nothing to do with the Life of Honour. You would have every Advantage of the Wife except the Name; and you can never prefer Sound to Sense. How will your Generosity attach the Heart of Lord *Rutland*! Can a mere Ceremony secure so steady a Flame as is lighted up by the Breath of unrestrained Love? Sweet Excellence! you must gently fan the Flame you have kindled. What are Titles?

“Fame, Wealth, and Honour, what are you to Love?”

Resign yourself implicitly to its Dictates. Reward my Friend's Passion, and you will secure to yourself not only his Heart, but his Gratitude.

I am,

Your sincere Admirer,

GEORGE WALLACE.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXVIII.

FANNY MEADOWS to GEORGE
WALLACE, *Esq*;

I Am astonished, Sir, that a Person, who professes himself to be the Friend of Lord *Rutland*, should give Advice, which could proceed only from an Enemy : Or that, after having rejected the most *honourable* Solicitation, in *my* Sense of the Word, you could imagine me capable of being influenced by the most detestable Sophistry ? Though bred in the humble Scenes of Life, I have possessed a Friend, elevated by Rank and Fortune, but more distinguished by Merit. She improved my Relish for every Virtue. I have now seen more of the degenerate Manners of the World, but my Heart is uncorrupted with them. — Lord *Rutland* feels and acknowledges the Force of my Objections—

tions — He submits to them. — How could you suppose, Sir, that your Arguments should succeed where his have failed? He wished to make me his, but it was by the Laws of God and Man. Though the Contract of the Heart is registered in Heaven, yet, whilst the Ceremonials of Marriage are ordained as the Support of moral Virtue, they are to be considered as religious Obligations. To transgress Duties we owe to Society, is to offend against our Creator. The Life of Honour, as you phrase it, is, in reality, a Life of Disgrace and Ignominy. — True Honour is only supported by the Laws of Christianity. — Both my Duty and my Love (yes, Sir, I acknowledge I *love*) confirm me in my Refusal of Lord *Rutland's* generous Proposals. By becoming his Wife I should degrade him in the Opinion of the World, and (as we are circumstanced) myself in my own esteem.

esteem. But were I to take your Advice—Ah! what a Wretch should I be. How lost to Virtue and Shame! Ruin, and deserved Infamy my Portion. Lord *Rutland*, Sir, never considered me in the humiliating Light in which you are pleased to place me. He knew what was due to his own and to my Character. — Perhaps you may accuse the poor Country Girl of Pride; but it is the Dignity of affronted Virtue. — My Resolution is fixed. — To be truly the Friend of Lord *Rutland*, Mr. *Wallace* will acquiesce with him in the Determination of

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LET-

L E T T E R XXIX.

FANNY MEADOWS to Lady GRESHAM.

THE Struggle is past. — *Lucy*, 'tis all over! I have quitted *Mrs. Castleton*, and bade adieu to every Hope of seeing *Lord Rutland* more. I have been importuned — (Oh! *Lady Gresham*, to what Insults does Poverty expose one!) I have been importuned to become — *Lord Rutland's* Mistress! By a Man who calls himself his *Friend* — Could *Lord Rutland* propose such an Expedient? Could he think of triumphing over my Virtue, because he knew he had gained a Place in my Heart? No! it is impossible — He is not capable of such Treachery. His generous Soul would have condescended to raise me to an Equality with him, but I cannot believe it ever harboured a Wish to level me with the weakest of Human Kind.

Kind. I have answered the Letter of this wretched Advocate for Guilt—I will deserve the Esteem of Lord *Rutland*, though I must not, cannot reward his Love.—But no more of these softening Complaints. Ought he not to know the Man whom he honours too much, by considering him as a *Friend*? But *my* Intelligence might appear to be interested,—and I have heard Lord *Rutland* frequently tell his Aunt, that Mr. *Wallace*, with a friendly and benevolent Disposition in other Respects, had Libertine Principles in regard to our Sex. His Letter is a Proof of this Part of his Character. Lord *Rutland* wishes and endeavours to promote his Reformation. Ah! can his Precepts, can such an Example fail, in Time, of producing the desired Effect?

I am now placed with an elderly Lady, very distant from my excellent Benefactress. With what Regret did
that

that amiable Woman bid me adieu! As I kissed her Hand, and poured forth the Effusions of my Heart, (alas! my Tears flowed faster than my Words,) she threw her Arms around my Neck, and clasped me fondly to her Bosom. — “My dear, dear Girl, (she kindly exclaimed,) how shall I live without you? — But I admire, I revere you for your Resolution; let me not weaken it. — Farewell, my noble *Fanny*! — Yes, you are dignified by Virtue.” I returned her Caresses, offered up a fervent Prayer for her’s and Lord *Rutland*’s Happiness, and, forcing myself from her, threw myself into the Chaise which she had ordered. The Servants all wept at parting — painfully-pleasing Proof of their Affection. Dear, honest Souls! I felt real Gratitude and Love in Return. More, alas! is not in my Power. — But I am in the Situation Providence af-

assigned for me, and I have no Right to — I will not complain.

Mrs. *Martyn*, the Lady with whom I now live, received me with Marks of Affection; in such a Manner, indeed, as convinced me my dear Benefactress had shewn her good Opinion in her Recommendation of me. My Task is easy: I have only to write for Mrs. *Martyn*, to read to her, and to discharge the little Offices of Tea-making, Carving, &c. when she has Company, which very rarely happens; for she is very old, and her Infirmities make her unfit and disinclined to much Society. She is very charitable, I find, was a good Wife, and, I fancy, a kind Mistress, for her Domestics are grown old in her Service. Her Books are her Delight, but I own her Studies are beyond my Depth. I read, but I do not comprehend them. My dear Miss *Piercy*'s Library chiefly consisted

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of

of religious Authors, the best Novels, Poetry, and History. We read, to teach us how to live ! What I now peruse would compose me to Sleep, if my Mind were less agitated. But I please my old Lady—She listens with Attention, till, lost in Meditation, she sinks into a gentle Nap. I find it necessary, however, still to continue my Employ, for if I stop, she awakes, and wonders what occasions the Pause, not being sensible, or not chusing to acknowledge her own Drowsiness. — I read again, and, after a Time, again lull her to Repose, the continued Sound of my Voice lengthening her Slumber.

The old Lady is very good, but rather too severe, I think, in her Notions. She condemns, as capital Crimes, what surely may properly be considered as innocent Indulgencies— I would, on no Account, have her see me read a Novel. All Poetry is corrupt,

rupt, she says, and she is glad I never attended Miss *Piercy* to any Town where I might have been seduced into its gay Amusements.—At Play-houses and Assemblies, she says, Satan is chief Proprietor.—Surely it is rather uncharitable to condemn all Pleasures for which we have no Relish. Amusement is necessary, and not only innocent but laudable, if it does not exceed the Bounds of Moderation. Mrs. *Martyn* does not, however, ask my Opinion, but gives me her own.—She wishes, I believe, to have my Assent, but I can't contradict my Sentiments so much as to join with her.

I must own that, notwithstanding my Reverence for this Lady's Character, my Heart is not disposed to attach itself to her, as it is did to Mrs. *Castleton*.—She does not possess those tender Feelings of the Soul, which attract and cement the Affection, and from which

arise our greatest Pains and Pleasures.
But it is certainly safer to trust to the
Principles, than to the Heart. Ah!
I feel it to be so.—The latter would
mislead me, but I will not attend to
it.—Adieu! my dear Lady *Gresham*.—
Let me have a Line very soon. I am

Ever yours,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

LET.

LETTER XXX.

*Lady GRESHAM to FANNY
MEADOWS.*

I Am glad, my Dear, very glad, to hear you are settled, but I must tell you, I think you have been too scrupulous. — Indeed, I have told you so before, but you did not mind me. Why, you would have made a Figure in what they call High Life. For my Part, I sometimes wish myself in our old Cottage again. — There I knew what I had to do, and could please myself with what I did; but here I am all Ignorance and Confusion. As for you, the Case is quite different. — By living so much with Miss *Piercy*, and, I suppose, being naturally cleverer, you are quite fit for a fine Lady, and, I am sure, Lord *Rutland* would never have had Reason to be ashamed of you. — I think I could talk with you better than I can write to you. — I really am like you with Regard to

M 3 Mrs.

Mrs. *Martyn's* Books, I don't always know your Meaning.—I wish I had a Quarter of your Sense, for, as it is, I am sometimes afraid Sir *Thomas* is ashamed of me. Poor *Jeffery*! he would have been proud of me.—I should have done much better to have chose him. But 'tis too late to repent when I can't mend myself.—I always used to think, *Fanny*, that when People married, it was that they might live together, but quite the contrary.—Here, I believe, you are somewhat under the same Mistake, only you have heard Miss *Piercy* talk of what was going forward in the great World; and 'tis quite the Fashion for Husband and Wife not to be seen together, so that it don't greatly signify who one is married to.—I sometimes see nothing of Sir *Thomas* for three or four Days together, and when he is at home, we are in separate Rooms, except at Meals. Heigh, ho! I thought I should have

have been much happier than I am. Yet how is it possible, with so much Grandeur about me, I should be uneasy.—I don't know how it is, but I look at my Finery without half the Pleasure I used to have in it. I suppose it was the Newness recommended it.—And as to a Coach, Lord! help me, I feel better when I am walking.

I have got a Cousin of Sir *Thomas's* to stay with me, and I hoped she would have taught me what to do; but she laughs so much at my Ignorance, that I feel quite ashamed of myself.—I durst hardly ask any Questions.—I must say, I think this making a Joke of any Body, is no Proof of Gentility, which Miss *Laurence* boasts so much of.—Indeed, if I had been brought up at Court, and neglected Opportunities of Learning, I should have been to blame for not doing better; but you know, *Fanny*, (nay you have said so) how should I, who never

was out of a Country Village, be at once acquainted with all the Fashions of behaving in Town?—'Tis cruel, and, I think, not just to laugh at me, when she might, by teaching, make something of me.

I always loved you, *Fanny*, but I love you now more than ever, for you seem to be my only Friend.—My poor Father and Mother are sent into a distant Part of the Country, for I do believe Sir *Thomas* is ashamed of his Relations. Dear Souls! they thought so, and were glad to get away.—They felt quite unsettled, and did not know what to do with themselves.—Well! it can't be helped now.—I wish you were with me, *Fanny*, and yet you are so handsome, and Sir *Thomas* is so taken with new Faces, perhaps I should quite lose his Heart then—So that 'tis better for us to write.—God bless you! and make you happier than is at present

Your sincere Friend,

LUCY GRESHAM.

L E T T E R XXXI.

FANNY MEADOWS to Lady GRESHAM.

HOW often, my dear Lady *Gresham*, we mistake the Means of Happiness! Disappointed by Experience, we fancy superior Joys in untried Situations. These are also deceitful! No State is exempt from Trials. You fancied, my *Lucy*, that Greatness and Happiness were only different Words of the same Meaning.—You find it to be otherwise. I feel for your Distresses; but beware of Jealousy, banish Distrust, or you admit a Guest that will entirely rob you of your Quiet.

The Customs of the World, I grant, may too much influence Sir *Thomas*; but I really believe, from what I have heard Miss *Piercy* remark of the Gay and Great, that the Attention is rather dissipated than the Affections engaged.—He is still equally estranged, but perhaps

perhaps the Evil is more easily to be cured. Patience and Meekness may restore his Heart, at least they will secure to you the Approbation of your own. If Miss *Laurence* despises you for what, as you truly observe, should not be imputed to you as a Fault, have you no valuable Friend who could instruct you in forming your Manners, without corrupting your Heart?—You think me qualified for the great World.—No, my Dear, my Acquaintance, my Intimacy I may say, with Miss *Piercy*, while it improved my Understanding, taught me the Value of rural Simplicity.—The Pleasures of a Town Life are tumultuous.—Miss *Piercy* always mixed in them, but was never dissipated by them. The still, serene Delights are most suitable to my Taste, and conformable to my Desire of Self Approbation.—Do not reproach Sir *Thomas* with his frequent Absences.—Consider the Tye he has upon your
Grati-

Gratitude, from the Obligations he has conferred, and that the Duty of every Wife is to render Home pleasing to her Husband.

My Life is as regular as I can wish, and I hope I may say my Heart is reduced to better Order than when I wrote last. I assure you, I have had some Attacks made upon it since I came here. Mrs. *Martyn's* Steward, a Man of about Thirty-five, handsome enough, well behaved, and good natured, is really become enamoured of your *Fanny*. He means me honourably. It is necessary in these degenerate Times to make this express Declaration. His Civilities had been unbounded, but I little suspected from what Source they flowed.—He has explained himself.—Mrs. *Martyn* is his Friend—his Advocate, but I cannot permit her to be a successful one.—My Heart is not disengaged from Lord *Rutland*, but I do not consult it on this Occasion.

Mr.

Mr. *Watson's* Taste and Disposition are entirely different from mine.—He is fond of hoarding up Money—my Joy would be in using it—He hates Reading, and I love it inexpressibly.—I acknowledge my Obligations to him, but own my Preference of a single State.—I tell him I should make him a very unsuitable Wife.—I enlarge upon my Poverty—He praises my Prudence and Economy.—Mrs. *Martyn* seconds him, and I cannot convince her by my Motives of Refusal. She thinks it would be a very good Establishment.—He will not desist.—Ah! my *Lucy*, must I be ever distressed with the Woes of Love? This was an unexpected Disturbance. I cannot, cannot consent.

* * * * *

I have intreated I may be urged no more on this Subject; Mrs. *Martyn*, from real Zeal for my Interest, will not give it up. I hope I shall not offend

offend her, but I cannot sacrifice my Happiness, my Duties, to obtain a Settlement, which has no other Recommendation than worldly Advantage. Mrs. *Martyn* is not a Judge of the Requisites to make me happy. We think very differently.—She tells me I should then be able to support my Mother, and prevent her Continuance in Guilt.—That was a Plea indeed, but Mr. *Watson* quieted the Struggle in my Breast, by saying, “That though he thought of marrying the Daughter, he did not mean to maintain the Mother;” and I think his Address has been cooler since the Mention of this Circumstance. O never, never can I be prevailed upon. Adieu! my Dear, I hope in my next to give you the entire Conclusion of this Affair.

Ever Yours,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXII.

Lord RUTLAND to GEORGE
WALLACE, Esq;

IT will not be—*Wallace!* my Passion is insurmountable. *Passion* did I say? It is my *Reason*, my *Life*, my *Happiness* or *Misery*.—What are the Advantages of Birth, of Wealth, without her? Yet let me not depreciate the Bounties of Providence. Do I not possess the Means of making others happy? Delightful Privilege! I will still feel, and be grateful; but, oh! my Friend, how contemptible do all the Pleasures of this gay Place appear to an enamoured Heart. I visit, I am seen at public Diversions, my Body fills a Space, but my Mind is unoccupied by any Employment. My Acquaintance are astonished by the Change. They ask Questions, they persecute me.—Ah! Good God, how impossible

impossible is it to talk of a beloved Object amongst a Set of Insensibles. It would be Profanation.

I have written to my Aunt *Castleton*; I have dwelt on the Subject nearest my Heart—I have intreated her to gain a Mitigation of my Sentence, a Repeal of my Banishment. Ah! the cruel obdurate *Fanny*; far from recalling me, she flies, she disdains me; the haughty Villager despises me. She has quitted my Aunt.—I must not learn whither she is gone.—Proud Fair One!—Pardon me, my sweetest *Fanny*, the undeserved Reproach! No Pride, no Semblance of Vice can lurk within that gentle Breast. The Principles of Duty actuate thy Conduct. Oh! that Duty pleaded my Cause, as well as Love, for that she loves me, *Wallace*, I have no doubt. How exalted such a Character! Love, and a Mother's Distress, were Parties on my Side; but Gratitude, a Mother's and Aunt's

Aunt's Shame, her own Unworthiness, (could I attribute Pride to such angelic Humility?) these conspired against my Happiness, and urged her to Flight, to secure her Victory.—My Aunt begs to conceal from me the Place of her Retreat.—She left her to avoid me. My *Fanny*, I will respect thy Motives; I will not see thee. I will try—painful Effort! to banish thee from my Heart; but ever, ever must I preserve for thee the Esteem due to thy Virtues.—My Friend, adieu! I now indeed know what it is to love; but, alas! I have only extended my Wishes to grasp Disappointment. Pity me, *Wallace*: 'Tis all the Relief you can offer to

Your affectionate,

RUTLAND.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXIII.

GEORGE WALLACE, *Esq;* to
Lord RUTLAND.

MY dear Lord, you must not indulge desponding Thoughts.— Is there but one Woman in the World can make you happy? Do not imagine so—Virtue is not the Growth of one particular Soil — As *Pope* says of Happiness,

“ 'Tis no where to be found, or every where.”

I wish I was with you in Town, but as I have Company at my House, I cannot leave it; therefore, I insist on your indulging me with a Visit. Remember, I take no Denial. Set off *immediately* is the Word of Command. —I did not imagine you would have suffered yourself to have fallen so desperately in Love. — I advised you to marry, and I had no Objection to

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your taking a little Tincture of Love; but you have over-dosed it, gone far beyond my Prescription, and if you continue to proceed thus without Consultation, your Recovery will be out of the Power of Medicine. — Change the Air, forsake the thin Food of Love for the more nourishing Diet of Beef and Mutton, and exercise your corporal rather than your mental Faculties. — Observe this Regimen, and I'll be answerable for the Expulsion of your Disease.

We have here a droll Set to divert you. — You will wish to know something of them, but really “These People have no Characters at all.” I can only say of them, their Manners are Camelian, their Notions of Life Gothic to the highest Degree of Barbarism. — They have been bred in a Desert, and are only fit to run wild amongst their native Savages. — You have heard me speak of my Uncle

Sommers.—

Sommers. — It is this old Gentleman, his Wife and Daughter, who detain me from the dear Town. I now view its Pleasures through the magnifying End of the Telescope, and seem to be excluded from *Elysium*. A little perverse, you will say; for really, when I am in *London*, Disgust creeps over my Engagements. — To add to my Disrelish for my present Society, I am afraid my Coz. has some Designs upon this pretty Person of mine. “What she thinks in her Heart you may read in her Eyes,” and indeed understand from her Lips, for she is most offensively sincere. If I thought the Girl handsome and agreeable, she should not need make any Advances; but Deuce take it, *Rutland*, she is not in my Style of Beauty, and is, I think, monstrously ungenteel. The old Gentleman and Lady consider me as the very Quintessence of Politeness; and Miss has imbibed her Ideas of Per-

fection from the Opinions of *Papa* and *Mamma*; so that I am the Idol of the Family.—Indeed, if I was desirous of securing a Conquest, I should be blameable in giving you an Invitation, for you have so many *captivable* Qualities, that I should assuredly lose my Share of this vulnerable Heart. Upon my Honour, *Rutland*, if you were not so devoted to your Rustic Fair, and could relish the Person and Accomplishments of my Coz, she has Recommendations that weigh heavy in the Scale of Prudence: Fifty Thousand Pounds have drossy Particles enough, with most People, to overbalance every genuine Quality and Virtue. You might perhaps make something of her. The Girl has a ductile Disposition. — Her Understanding is unpolished, but probably it might be in your Power to brighten it into Lustre. — The World would applaud this Choice, as much as it would

would condemn the other.—*Lydia* possesses the Magnet that attracts the Multitude: Surely it cannot act with repelling Force on you.—Do, “Ponder well, be not severe.” I will make over to you my Interest, and I think I can secure your Election. I expect you with Impatience.

Ever yours,

GEORGE WALLACE.

LETTER XXXIV.

Lord RUTLAND to Mrs. CASTLETON.

I Accepted an Invitation from my Friend *Wallace*, to diversify the Scene, and in the hope that Change of Place, and different Society, might, in some Measure, effect a Change of Sentiment. But, alas! Madam, to a Lover every Situation is equally uncomfortable, that presents not the beloved Object — He sees nothing, he enjoys nothing but the darling Idea. — There was a Time when the Conversation of *Wallace* was sufficient to my Happiness, but now his Gaiety is discordant, his Discourse is insipid, his Advice tiresome. The Attentions paid me by Mr. and Mrs. *Sommers*, and their really beautiful Daughter, are only Incense offered to my Rank.

They

They disgust me. *Lydia Sommers*, in the Bloom of Loveliness, and with the unstudied Manners of Rustic Sincerity, blends in her Character a Fondness for Parade, and a Feminine Softness. She loves *Wallace's* Person, and she idolizes my Title. She sometimes yields to the Emotions of her Heart, and at others indulges the Suggestions of Ambition. Ah, Madam! Nature never formed another *Fanny Meadows*. *Lydia Sommers* has rural Simplicity, but she does not possess the artless Elegance of my *Fanny* — *Mine*, did I say? Oh that I could realize the Expression! But my Prospects in Life are terminated by Despair.

Mr. and Mrs. *Sommers* seem to consider me as a Being of a superior Order, and annex to the Advantages of Rank, a supreme Degree of Felicity.—I even sicken at the frequent Re-

petition of my Title, which is a Sound most delightfully familiar to their Lips. — Great God! is it possible that any one should debase the real Dignity of Human Nature, by an undue Estimation for mere Titular Distinctions! My Rank and Fortune would, indeed, have been the Means of Happiness, could I have shared them with *Fanny Meadows*! But now, vain Preheminence! empty Possessions!

* * * * *

I resume my Pen with a more grateful Sense of the Goodness of Providence. Wealth is a real Advantage, I own—I *feel* it. I have rescued a Family from Distress. I have saved an intended Victim from the Jaws of Destruction. How painful, for Age and Sickness, to struggle with the racking Gripe of Poverty! How severe the Fall, from Affluence to Penury!

nury ! Gracious Heaven ! can there be a more delightful Sensation than I have experienced ! No Gratification of Passion can yield any Enjoyment equal to the Indulgence of Benevolence. My Heart expands with Transport — The unhappy Family know not the Source from whence the seasonable Assistance flowed. — I spare them the humiliating Acknowledgment of a fancied Obligation — The Approbation of a gratified Heart is sufficient Recompence, and I imparted to these miserable Sufferers as to the Representatives of The SAVIOUR of MANKIND.

I will repine no more — The most delightful, the most ennobling Offices of Humanity are still within my Power. I am more reconciled to my Fate — May the amiable *Fanny* be happy, and I am resigned. — Tell me, Madam, when any Opportunity offers
of

of contributing to her Felicity, and make me the Instrument of securing it. Ah! can I then support the Thought, that another will ever dispossess me of her Heart? Can I think this, and preserve Life?—I hope I can—She never will be mine—She has Virtues to adorn the Conjugal State, and I will learn—if possible—I will learn to wish her to become—the Wife of another. Can I ever be capable of this painful Self-denial? I know not my own Resolution—I *ought* to do it; may my Duty influence my Practice! But Human Power alone is insufficient to accomplish the arduous Task. Adieu, dear Madam!—Do not permit the excellent *Fanny* to indulge a Supposition that I can ever *forget* her—I will endeavour to subdue my Passion; but to *forget* her—Impossible! The Friend shall take Place of the Lover, and she will be ever the Object of my Esteem,
though

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though I must not indulge a more
tender Sentiment.

I am, dear Madam,
with the truest Respect and Affection,

Ever yours,

RUTLAND.

LET.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Lord RUTLAND to Mrs. CASTLETON.

YOU ask me, Madam, the Character of *Mr. Scarsdale* *, and I find the Enquiry is made on *Miss Ormesby's* Account, to whom he has address'd Proposals.—Warn the unhappy Lady of her Danger, for to wed him would be unavoidable Destruction. Is it possible, dear Madam, that Human Nature can be so depraved, as to delight in occasioning Misery? Or is there a Selfishness in some Minds, which renders them insensible to others Sufferings, whilst they can enjoy their own narrow Gratifications? I have saved an innocent Girl from this cruel Spoiler. She is married, and

* This Letter of *Mrs. Castleton's* does not appear.

removed

removed to a distant Part of the Country, but the Wretch has no sooner lost his intended Prey, than he lays Snares to entrap another. How is Wealth abused, when it becomes the Property of such a De-luder as *Scarsdale*! — He has seen this young Creature only twice, but he finds it to be *impossible to live without her*! He is certain no one ever loved to the Extremity he does — He would “give the Half of his Fortune to purchase Miss *Newton’s* Favour.” To make the Woman he loves the Object of the World’s Contempt, and the Martyr to his Passion. Detested be the Name of Love, if such are its Effects! But it cannot be — True Love is an Emanation from the Deity, and no polluted Current can flow from so pure a Source. Even Passion, when blended with such an Affection of the Mind, partakes somewhat of this divine Essence. —

It

It is not, however, to me that *Scarf-dale* has imparted his Designs — *Wallace* is his Confidant — I betrayed the Trust, he says, reposed in me, and am unworthy of the *Friendship* of a Man of *Honour*. Ah! how are these sacred Names profaned as well as that of *Love*. If I had assisted him to the Ruin of his future Hope, he would have accounted me his Friend; but for disappointing his present Pursuit, he mistakes me for his Enemy. He enjoined Secresy to *Wallace*, lest his Scheme should be circumvented, but he is preparing every Engine to undermine the Virtue of Miss *Newton*, lest she should also desert the Place; for it seems she is soon to be married. — My Friend knows nothing personally of Miss *Newton*, but has heard she is very amiable. — She may be ignorant of the infamous Character of *Scarf-dale*, and his specious Appearance may engage her Affections. I will write

to

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to the intended Victim, and, if possible, prevent her from becoming a Sacrifice. May Miss Ormesby escape the Arts of this Deceiver! Adieu, dear Madam,

Yours, most unfeignedly,

RUTLAND.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXVI.

Lord RUTLAND *to Mrs.* CASTLETON.

COULD you have believed it, Madam? Your Nephew has turned Knight-Errant, and has rescued distressed Beauty from the unhallowed Grasp of a brutal Ravisher.

My Friend *Wallace* and myself went out early this Morning on a Hunting Party.—The Chace led us much further from Home than we proposed. My Horse was remarkably eager for the Sport, and fatigued me by his Impatience. I forced him from the rest, and determined to ramble back (my Servants with me) another Way. My Mind, however, was soon intent upon a very different Employment than that of observing the Road; but I was roused from my Contemplation by the violent Shrieks
of

of a Female Voice, which issued from an adjacent Wood. I reached the Place in a few Moments, when I perceived three Men masked, attempting to force a Lady into a Chariot and Four.—She screamed most piteously, but her Cries were unavailing. Just as I came up, one of the Men had lifted her into the Chariot. I demanded the Reason of this violent Attack, and one of the three Villains answered—“A horrid Business, faith! — I wish I had never engaged in it.” The principal Actor in this Deed of Baseness now turned towards me, and, starting back,—“Lord *Rutland*! cried he—Confusion! again prevented by him!”—His Exclamation, and the known Character and Intentions of *Scarsdale*, convinced me it could be no other than him.—I approached him: “Mr. *Scarsdale*! is it possible you can be engaged in so detestable a Villainy?” “Whatever I am en-

gaged in, answered he, I have Courage to execute. My Friend, fall on.” “Not I, truly, said he who had first spoken, I am quite rejoiced to be rid of this infamous Affair.” He then clapped Spurs to his Horse, and was out of Sight in a Moment.—*Scarfsdale* seemed to be intimidated at this unexpected Desertion—The others, I found, were only Servants.—In a resolute Manner I insisted on his resigning the Lady. He then recovered some Degree of false Spirit, drew his Sword, and attacked me so unexpectedly, that I had certainly been wounded, had not the Lady hastily thrown herself between me and the Sword, and received its Point in her Arm. I can’t express how much I was shocked at this Accident. She immediately fainted in my Arms, which I extended to support her, and the cowardly *Scarfsdale*, finding himself unobserved, took the Opportunity of making his
Escape,

Escape, I suppose behind one of his Servants. As soon as the Lady recovered from her Swoon, I lifted her to the Chariot, after binding my Handkerchief round her Arm, which bled very fast, and desired the Postillions to drive gently to the nearest House. They were disposed, I found, to oblige me; and one of them told me, there was a Farm House within half a Mile, where they would set us down. I supported the Lady during this short Journey. You will wish me to be more particular in my Description of her, but my Divinity was wrapped in a Cloud. She was muffled up in a long Cloak, and wore a Mask. I had attempted to withdraw the Mask, to give her Air, but she recovered before I had removed it, and gently put away my Hand.

As soon as we were seated in the Chariot, "Permit me, Sir, said she in a Whisper, to remain personally un-

known to you. But my Gratitude—" She stopped—she seemed to struggle for Expression, but was incapable of Utterance. She then clasped her Hands, and lifted her Eyes to Heaven, in mental Thankfulness. Just as we arrived at the Place of our Destination, she drew herself from my supporting Arms, and, dropping on her Knees—" O, my Preserver! said she, in a low tremulous Tone, I have not been a light Creature—Indeed, indeed, I am not guilty, but miserable—I owe you more."—I raised her immediately. " Ah! Madam, returned I, did not you hazard your Life to preserve mine?"—She looked earnestly upon me—She pressed her Hand to her Heart: At that Moment the Chariot stopped.

I carried her into the House. The People viewed us with Countenances of Wonder and Surprise. She faintly told them her Name was *Newton*, that she

she begged to lie down for an Hour, and then she doubted not being able to return home.—The Readiness with which these good People offered to assist her, convinced me she was known and beloved.—I begged she would permit her Wound to be examined, and, without waiting for an Answer, dispatched a Servant of the Farmer on one of my Horses, for the nearest Surgeon. The Lady assured me it was unnecessary.—I intreated she would give me Leave to attend her home, if the Surgeon's Opinion was favourable.—“ Sir, said she, as she quitted the Room, if you wish to serve me, do not by any Means wish to know more of me.—My Gratitude can never be less lively.”—Her Voice was scarcely articulate. I was very much affected by her Behaviour, but, influenced by her earnest Request, I did not attempt to discover her Secret.—“ She is a sweet Creature, cried the Farmer, it is Meat and Drink to her to do Good.”

I was pleased with the Man's Expression, who would, I make no doubt have expatiated farther on the Subject had I made any Enquiries ; but to avoid even the Appearance of a Curiosity she wished to repress, I walked to meet the Surgeon, who soon arrived, and pronounced the Wound to be so slight, that it would be healed in a few Days. I rewarded him for this pleasing Intelligence, and then sent up to the Lady to know if I might be permitted to take a personal Leave of her. She excused herself on Account of her Weakness, but intreated me to accept the Thanks of an ever grateful Heart. I ordered a Post Chariot to attend till the Lady chose to return.—I then desired the Farmer to instruct me how to regain the Road to Mr. *Wallace's*, and he sent one of his Men with me.

My Friend had been uneasy at my Absence, and my Return seemed to occasion general Satisfaction. I was
raillied

raillied on my Adventure, and ridiculed for my Insensibility and Want of Curiosity. Be it so; Though I am happy in having been the Instrument of succouring Distress, I am indifferent about the personal Graces of the Lady. But what a Wretch is *Scarsdale*! “Love! Did he call it Love? O ill-timed Thought.” He had wounded the Object of his Passion, he feared Punishment, and the Coward fled.—He left her (he knew not to the contrary) in the Arms of Death. May his Disappointment produce Remorse and Amendment!—We have enquired after him. He is not returned home. I suppose he is too much ashamed of his Undertaking to shew his Face. Good Night! dear Madam. I am really fatigued, and can only subscribe myself

Your dutifully affectionate

RUTLAND.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

FANNY MEADOWS to Lord
RUTLAND.

I Did not believe it possible for me to feel an Increase of Esteem and Gratitude for Lord *Rutland*; but his Protection of Miss *Newton* has conferred the highest Obligation on *Fanny Meadows*. Yes, my Lord, it was that unhappy Girl who was become the Sport of lawless Passion, and very near falling a Victim to savage Cruelty.

To avoid your generous Pursuits, I changed my Name, and, in the shocking Contest, I concealed my Person as much as possible from your Observation. But what?—Words cannot do Justice to so exalted a Character. Had you known me to have been the Object of Mr. *Scarsdale*'s Passion, some Remains of a too tender Attachment
might

might have pleaded for me, and been blended with a nobler Motive for my Preservation: But now—a supposed Stranger—you are, indeed, an Instrument of Heaven. Best of Men! the liveliest Representative of Providence! Yet whilst I feel, whilst I indulge an increased Regard for such unequalled Merit, I rejoice that I was not influenced by it to make any Concession fatal to your Peace and Character. The Wife of Lord *Rutland* should possess every Perfection that can adorn Mortality.—Birth, Fortune, every Excellence.—Permit me, my Lord, in the humble Vale of Obscurity, to reverence the Virtues it was impossible for me to reward.

My present Benefactress supplies to me, as far as is in her Power, the Loss of Mrs. *Castleton*'s maternal Tenderness. (Ah! must I still lament my Ignorance of the Fate of a real Parent.)

rent.) She removes with me to a distant Seat in another County, far, I hope, from the Observation of designing Libertines. Young as I am, I should be disgusted with the World, but that the Virtues of a *Rutland* and a *Castleton* reconcile me to it. Farewell! my Benefactor, my Preserver, my Guardian Angel!

I am,

With the liveliest Sense of your
Favours,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged and grateful,

FRANCES MEADOWS.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.



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